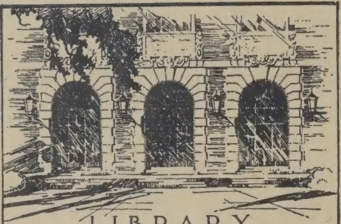

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MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.

VOLUME LI.

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SHE LEARNED TO ORDER A COCKTAIL AND TO SCOLD THE WAITER ABOUT ITS FLAVOR

Drawn by Will Foster

[See short story, "The Ends of the Earth"]

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE
Vol. LI February, 1914 Number I

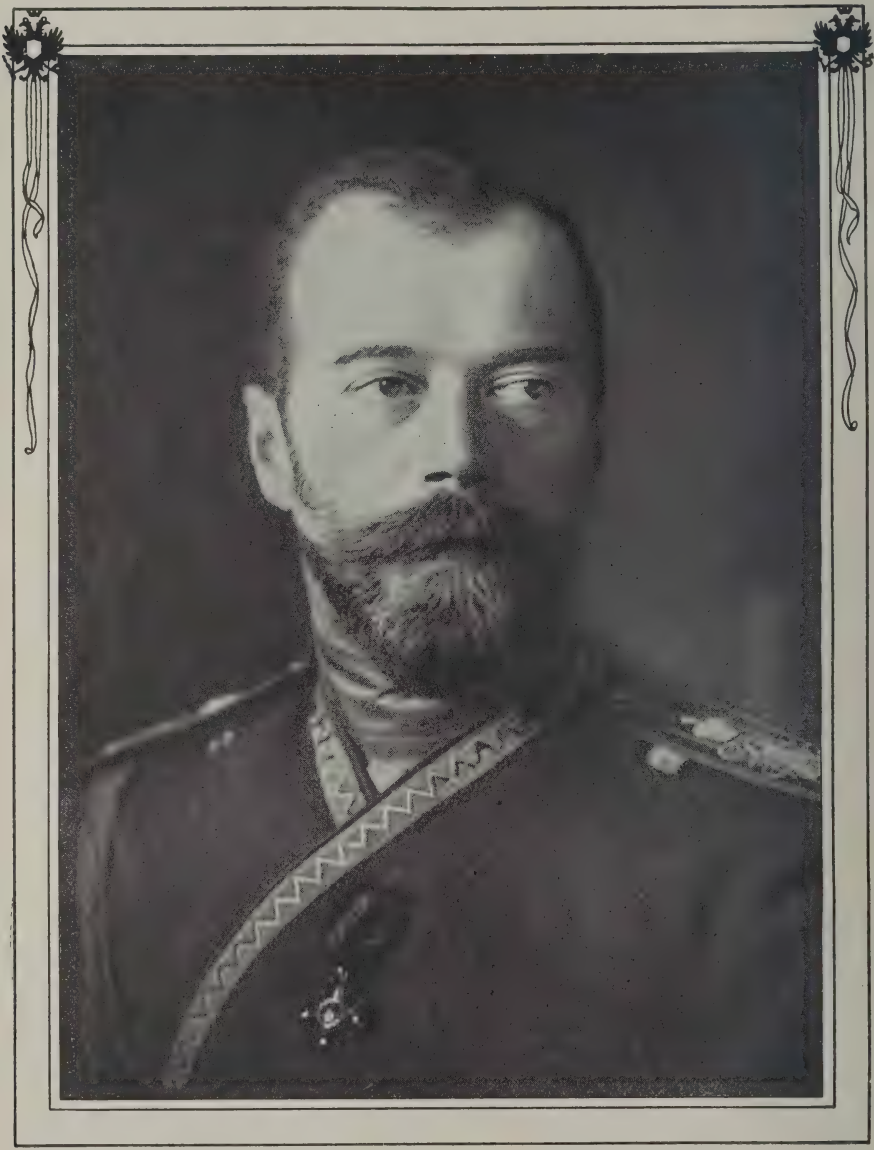
THE CZAR AND HIS FAMILY

BY WINTHROP BIDDLE

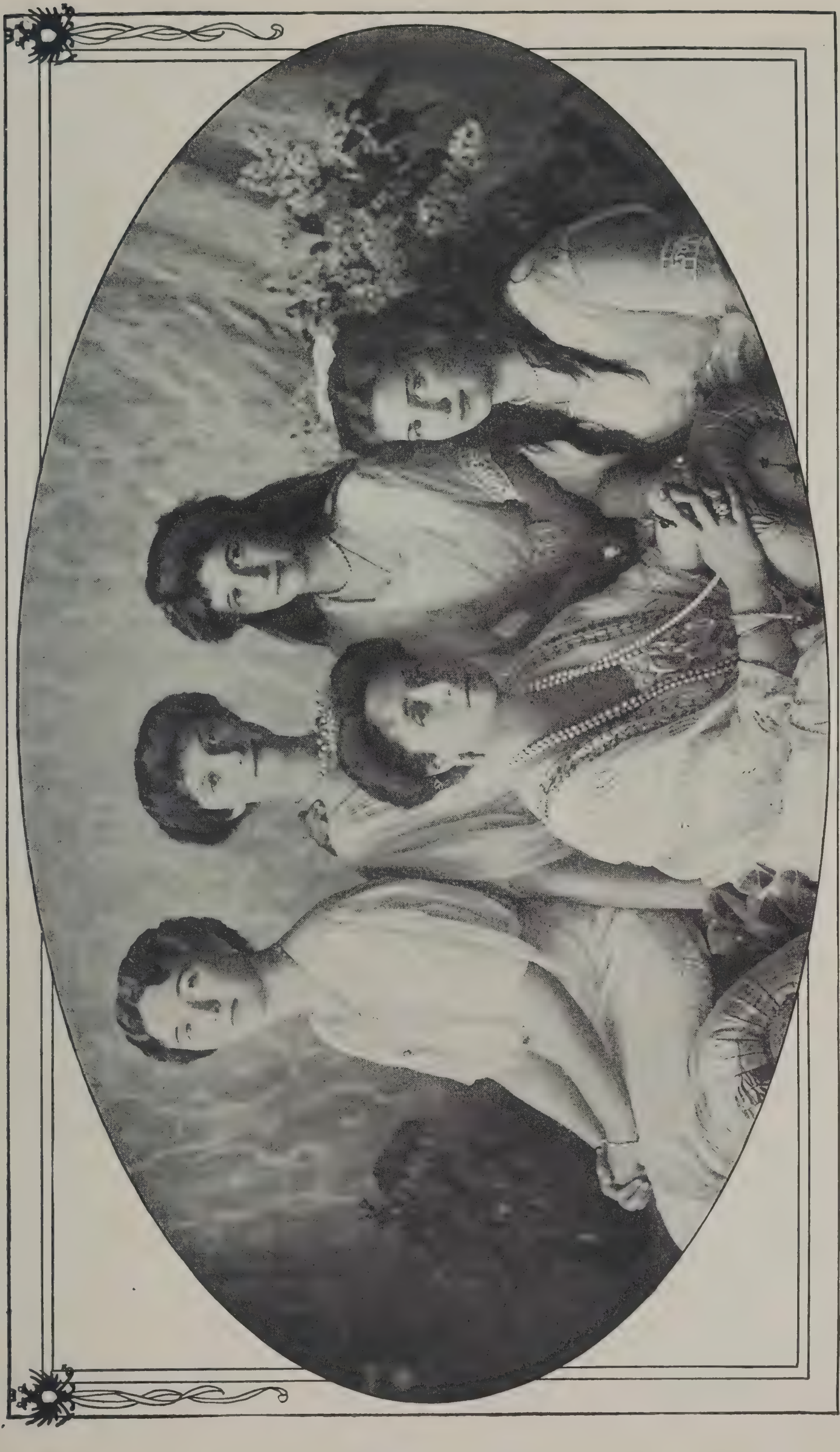
OF all the marriageable princesses of Europe there are none that command at the present moment a greater share of popular attention than the two eldest daughters of the Czar of Russia, namely, the nineteen-year-old Grand Duchess Olga, and her sister, Grand Duchess Tatiana, who will be seventeen in May.

Crown Prince Alexander of Servia, Crown Prince Boris of Bulgaria, as well as the heir apparent to the throne

LATEST PICTURE OF THE CZARINA AND THE CZAREWITCH of Greece, likewise the Crown Prince of Rumania, Prince Peter of Montenegro, the German Kaiser's sailor son, Prince Adalbert, and his brothers, Oscar and Joachim, have all been mentioned in turn as having won the hearts of these two imperial maidens. It may well be assumed that most of them have visited the court of St. Petersburg more or less in the rôle of suitor. But the young grand duchesses, who are wholesome, high-spirited, sensible girls, are not likely to bestow their hand where they cannot give their heart,



HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY NICHOLAS II, CZAR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS. IN THIS PICTURE THE CZAR IS WEARING THE UNIFORM OF A HETMAN OF THE FAMOUS DON COSSACKS, BOTTLE-GREEN CLOTH WITH BRAIDS AND EPAULETS OF GOLD BULLION AND SILVER. THE UNDERVEST WHICH SHOWS AT THE THROAT IS OF CRIMSON SATIN



THE CZARINA WITH HER DAUGHTERS, A QUARTET OF IMPERIAL GRAND DUCHESSES

THE CZAR AND CZARINA WITH THEIR FIVE CHILDREN, PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE TSARSKOYE SELO PALACE

merely for political considerations. Political considerations, however, cannot be wholly ignored by daughters of a great monarch.

Crown Prince Carol of Rumania, it is thought, is looked upon with as much, if not more, favor by Princess Olga, than any other. Prince Carol, son of the second king of Rumania, which has been a separate kingdom only since 1888, is in his twenty-first year, and is a handsome, stalwart youth of agreeable personality. He and the other members of the Rumanian royal family are of the House of Hohenzollern. Carol's mother was the German Princess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

There are grounds, however, for the belief which now prevails at St. Petersburg, and likewise at the various other courts, that Grand Duchess Olga is willing to become the consort of her second cousin, Grand Duke Demetrius Pavlovitch, and that it is on his account that she has rejected the suggestion of other matrimonial alliances.

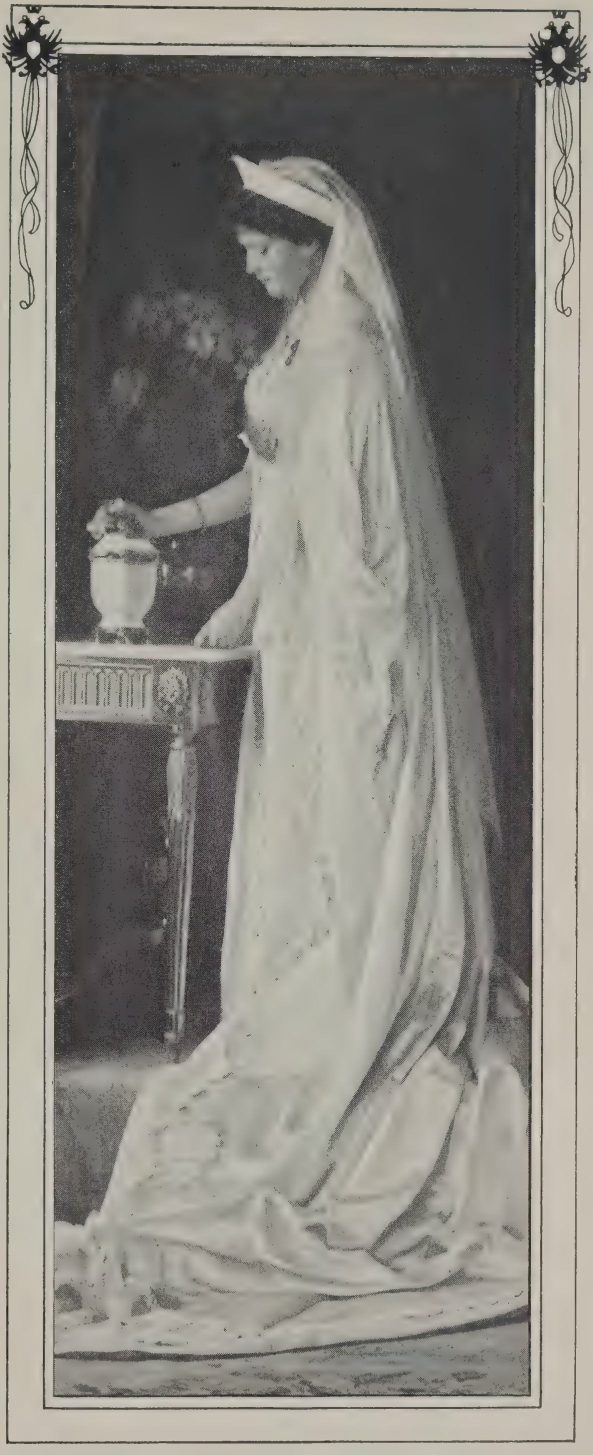
Demetrius is to-day far and away the most comely scion of the reigning house of Romanoff, is possessed of an immense fortune, which will be still further augmented on the death of his father, Grand Duke Paul, and is universally liked. Twenty-three years of age, he lost his mother, an elder sister of the present King of Greece, a few days only after his birth at Moscow, and was brought up by his aunt, the widowed Grand Duchess Sergius.

He is a particular favorite of the Czar and Czarina, and has managed to keep his name thus far singularly clear from any sort of scandal, despite the manifold temptations that dog the footsteps of every rich and good-looking member of a reigning family. From this union he might even become both the son-in-law of Nicholas II, and his successor in the event of the death of the Czarewitch.

A woman on the throne of Russia would not be without precedent, as its Czarinas have contributed some of the most glorious pages of its history.

As for Grand Duchess Tatiana, it is possible that she may one day become Queen of Great Britain and Empress of India, not through inheritance — though as a great-granddaughter of the late Queen Victoria, she is in the line of succession to the English crown—but through marriage to the Prince of Wales, who is a couple of years her senior.

The prince is to visit the court of St. Petersburg late in the spring, or at the beginning of the summer, to renew his acquaintance with his cousins there, and the fact that he is devoting a considerable amount of time at Oxford to the private study of Russian — one of the most difficult languages to acquire — would seem to intimate that his trip to the banks of the Neva has some more



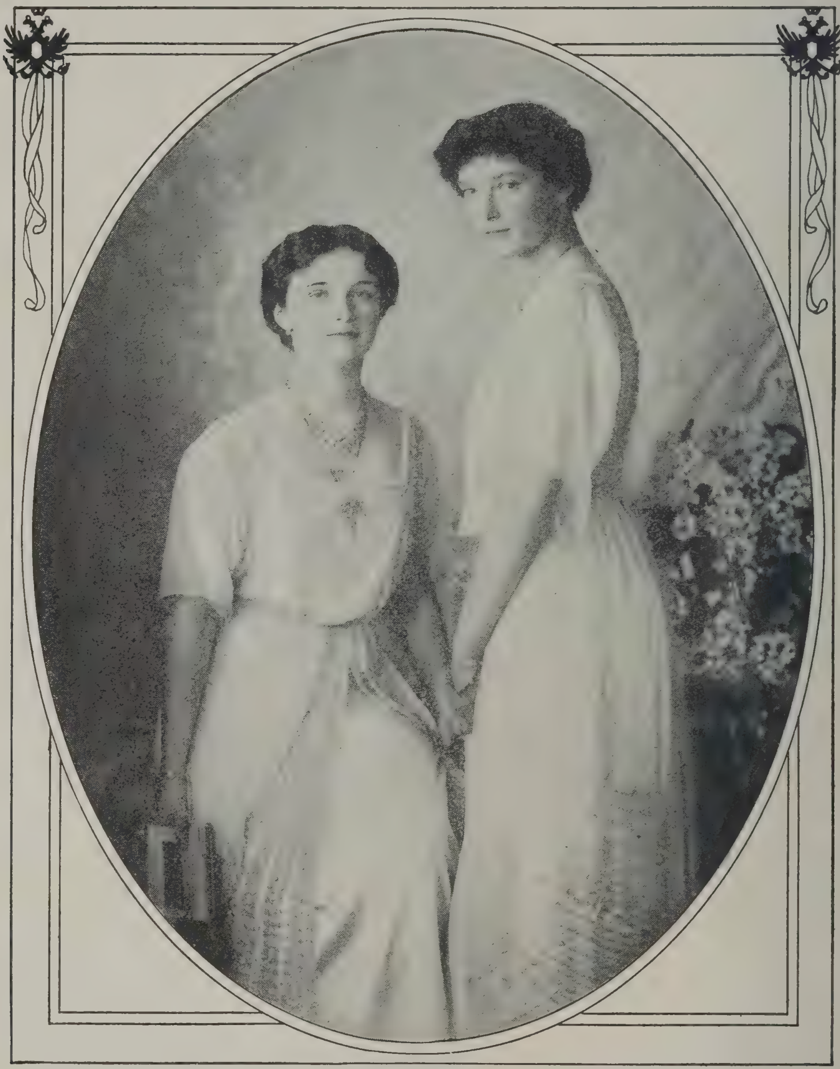
HER IMPERIAL HIGHNESS THE GRAND DUCHESS OLGA NICHOLAEWNA, THE CZAR'S ELDEST DAUGHTER, IN COURT COSTUME WEARING THE IMPERIAL TIARA OF DIAMONDS AND PEARLS AND THE GRAND STAR OF THE ST. CATHERINE ORDER serious purpose in view than a mere complimentary visit.

Like her sisters, Grand Duchess Tatiana has been brought up in the English fashion, under the eyes of the Czarina, who spent almost her entire girlhood with her grandmother, Queen Victoria, at Balmoral, Osborne, and Windsor.

English has always been the language spoken by the emperor, the empress, and their children in the intimacy of the family circle. The young people have always had English nurses and English governesses. One of the latter, a Miss Egger, has written, with the permission of her employers, a charming book about her experiences in their service.

It constitutes a sympathetic portrayal of the quiet simplicity of the private life of the imperial couple with their four girls and little boy, contrasted with the magnificent pomp and splendor of the Russian court.

Except on state occasions, the em-



THE CZAR'S ELDEST DAUGHTER OLGA, AND HER SISTER TATIANA peror and his wife and children breakfast, lunch, and dine by themselves, save for the occasional presence of three or four of the most intimate members of their suite. Whatever Nicholas may appear to be to his 140,000,000 subjects, he is at any rate no autocrat in the eyes of his family.

As a matter of fact he is far more of a family man, a man of refined, modest, retiring nature than an autocratic man.

He devotes as much of his time as he can spare from his state duties to his children, playing tennis and entering into their sports.

The four young grand duchesses are his invariable companions whenever he goes out for a canter, all of them riding side-saddle. They are thoroughly at home on horseback, and the two elder of the girls are now colonels of the Third Hussars, and of the Eighth Lancers, respectively, and at great military reviews lead their regiments past the saluting base, wearing, with a riding skirt, the uniform of their corps.

No matter what people may say of Nicholas, as a monarch, and there are those who insist that he is ruining Russia with his liberal reforms and his grant of popular government to the nation, no one can deny that his home life is a model. It is the kind that appeals to the English-speaking peoples in whom the fondness for hearth and home is innate.

It was not always so in the history of Russia. Indeed, the annals of the House of Romanoff are particularly rich in tragedies resulting from family dissensions.

Marie and Anastasia, the emperor's other daughters, respectively fifteen and thirteen, are likewise, as their photographs show, very beautiful girls. With four such daughters and a queen of the rare and refined beauty of the Czarina, the love of home and home life of the emperor is perfectly easy to understand.

And, in addition, there is his young son Alexis, the heir to the throne, now a lad of ten.

A RANCH ECHO

Just a dreaming o' you, just a dreaming o' you
And my bronco stands so quiet that I know he's dreaming, too;
And the cattle squat in bunches and the sun drops burning red
In the cottonwoods a swaying near the river's singing bed;
And a soft wind beats the prairie with the gentlest o' whips
Till it seems your little fingers are a straying o'er my lips.

Just a yearning for you, just a yearning for you
When the night drifts down the mountains and the stars come
loping through;
And I sit out here a longing and I reach my hand across,
For it seems you must be near me on a little spirit horse;
And I lose myself a musing where the ghostly river gleams
If some day we'll ride together to the mountains o' our dreams.

Just a hungering for you, just a hungering for you
When the winds are humming sweetly all the songs they ever knew;
And I spread my old gray blanket—and I leave a little room,
For you might come o'er the mountains down the cañon and the
gloom;
Then I lie awake a dreaming and I ask the stars above
If some night you'll creep beside me in the valley o' our love?

Gordon Johnstone

ILARIA OF THE HALLS

BY CORALIE STANTON AND HEATH HOSKEN

THE room was the tawdriest place imaginable. The wall-paper was pale blue, with huge pink watered bows sprawling all over it. The mock Chippendale furniture had frightfully unnatural curves; the curtains were of pale-blue pongee, with monstrous frills, and the cushions were the same, and all rather dirty. The white marble mantelpiece was buried under masses of photographs, mostly unframed, nearly all in costume, and every one bearing some such aggressive signature as "Yours ever, Koko"; "To my darling Ria, from her devoted Marie"; "To the best of girls—Reggie"; "To my pal from Snuffy," and so on.

On the walls were a few cheap and popular engravings and several large framed photographs of a shapely young woman whose tights and general air of bold abandon almost entirely obliterated the genuine loveliness of her face.

The original of these photographs sat at a tiny writing-table with exaggerated spindle legs. She had a pen in her hand, and a sheet of note-paper lay on the blotter before her. The light of the pink-shaded reading-lamp was full on her face. It was lovely and flowerlike, but the *tout ensemble* of her appearance was like the room, tawdry, frowzy, suggesting a woman who never opened the windows of her being to let in fresh air.

She was quite young and slim; her abundant hair was dyed a vivid dark red that did not harmonize at all with her skin, or, rather, with what one imagined her skin must be under the masses of ill-applied powder and paint; the eyebrows and lashes were stiff with whatever preparation she used to make them black; the bister marks under the big blue eyes, however, were natural, and so was the soft glowing red of the pouting lips. Her white blouse was most elaborate; she wore three strings of large imitation pearls around her throat and a diamond star pendant. Her hands were nicely kept and covered with turquoises. On her arms were long, white kid gloves tucked in at the wrists and very dirty. She had flung her huge befeathered hat on a table and her red Empire coat and sable stole on a chair before she sat down to write.

She wrote laboriously and read the words aloud, as people do on the stage. She had a pretty voice, like a child's.

> MY DARLING MOTHER:
>
> I was so glad to get your last letter. I'm afraid I've been a long time answering it, but, you see, I've got such a lot to do. Yes, I like my new place all right. My mistress is kind, but a rare one for work. I'm at it fairly all day. Thanks ever so much for the cream. It was a treat. We had it in the kitchen.

There was a curious little sound in the girl's throat as she wrote these words. She looked around her vacantly for a moment, as if searching her memory, then went on:

> No, I'm afraid I don't get much time to read the Bible, but I can go to chapel on Sundays—

Her pen faltered here. She broke off, blew her nose with a lace-edged rag that reeked of patchouli, and took a gulp from a tumbler of whisky and soda by her side. "It's true enough," she muttered, "I can go to chapel—if I like." Then she wrote on:

> I've managed to save up five shillings, and I'm sending you a postal order. I'm sorry it's not more, but I didn't really better myself coming here, and every little helps; doesn't it?

She stopped writing again, and taking a large bag of sham gold chain from her lap, fumbled in it, finding some coppers, three sovereigns, and a five-pound note.

"Cora!" she shouted at the top of her voice.

A maid with an impossibly pert expression answered the summons.

" Run out and get me a postal order for five bob, there's a good girl. And be quick about it, because I'm late to-night. Here's a quid, and—I say, I'll have a pint of fizz, instead of the stout, with my dinner."

When the maid had departed she took up her pen again.

> And now good-by for to-day, as I'm wanted up-stairs. I hope you're well. I am quite, and I haven't had any chilblains this winter.
>
> With best love, your loving daughter,
>
> ILARIA BLEWETT.

A high-sounding Christian name for the daughter of simple Cornish fisherfolk, and yet easily explained.

Just before the girl was born her mother had had as a lodger in her little whitewashed cottage on the cliff a young artist. When he went he left behind him a photograph of the tomb of Ilaria del Carretto in the cathedral at Lucca. The fisherman pinned it on the wall of his wife's bedroom, and through the dark hours it brought her comfort and made her think in her vague half delirium that it would be nice to be dead and quiet like that, too. So when the girl was born they called her Ilaria. Certainly she had nothing else in common with the high-born Tuscan lady who lies so calmly in her wakeless sleep with her feet on her little dog.

The girl had just risen, after lighting a cigarette, and was gathering up her outdoor garments to take them into the adjoining room when the bell of the hall door pealed loudly through the tiny flat.

She answered it herself. She had only the one maid, who had not yet returned with the postal order. She flushed a little with excitement; she expected some new clothes—clothes that had a special meaning for her.

A young man stood outside. He was short and thick set; he showed a shock of pale red hair as he awkwardly took off his hat; he had a plain, honest face covered with freckles and he wore roughly countrified clothes.

He looked with a startled glance at the apparition in the doorway.

" Please," he asked, with hesitation, in a pleasant but uneducated voice, " could I see Miss Blewett for a few minutes?"

Ilaria had been staring at him with dilated eyes. Suddenly she made a quick movement, as if she would shut the door in his face. Then she burst into a laugh.

" Why, it's Jim—Jim Lanyon! Don't you know me, Jim?"

The young man peered into her face and fell back.

" No, no," he muttered. " What do you mean? You're—you're not—"

" But I am. Come in, Jim."

He followed her. He looked around him in dazed fashion, and yet he took in everything in the room, the tawdriness, the close air, the reek of musk and tobacco-smoke, the vulgar photographs, the half-emptied tumbler, the general atmosphere, if not of dissipation, of untidiness and laxity.

" What does it mean?" he asked at last. " What are you doing here? This is the address your mother gave me, but she told me you were in service — a housemaid—that this was a new place you'd been in about a month. She asked me to come and see you while I was in London. She sent you messages and some cream." He looked vaguely at a parcel in his hand.

" What does it mean?" he repeated dully. " Why do you look—like that?" There was horror in his steady gray eyes.

" It means," she answered quickly, and rather tremulously, " that I've been deceiving mother, Jim. I couldn't help it. She'd have took it so badly. I—I'm not a servant, Jim."

For a moment there was a silence; then he gripped her arm.

" What are you?" he asked between his teeth. He was only the son of a farm laborer and a humble mechanic himself, but his face was touched with the white sternness of a judge.

The girl whimpered under his steely touch, quailed before the horror in his eyes.

" Not that, Jim!" she murmured. " Not that! Oh, you're hurting me! I "—she hesitated, searching for words—" I'm a singer."

He gave a great sigh of relief, but he frowned still.

" A singer! You mean that you sing in public, on platforms—at concerts?"

" No, Jim—not at concerts."

" Illy!" He gave her the old nickname of their youth. He had always protected her and fought her battles; but now his voice was terrible. " You don't mean that you sing in a playhouse!"

She shook her head.

" No—a music-hall, Jim." She spoke the word almost inaudibly.

"A music-hall!" If she had said she disported herself nightly in Gehenna the Cornishman could not have been more horrified. His eyes, traveling round the room, fell on the photographs on the walls. One of them was really wonderful. Both the photographer and Ilaria had been in a happy mood. The silken tights showed the lovely lines of the slender limbs, the graceful body seemed poised for flight; taken in the act of dancing, the little feet appeared to twinkle in the air; the expression of the face was one of joyous abandon; a rose was held lightly, roguishly between the white teeth.

From the picture Jim Lanyon's gaze returned to the girl's face. The fury of accusation in it roused her pride.

"I'm Ilaria Delorme," she said, half sobbing, half triumphant. "I'm getting on like a house on fire. I'm quite a star! Why, you must have heard my last song; they're all whistling it in the streets—'Take my tip, boys, and let her go!'"

The young man laughed brutally. He had gripped her arms again; now he flung her from him, and she fell back, gasping, against the little writing-table, upsetting the tumbler and an ash-tray, which fell clattering together to the floor.

"Ilaria Delorme, are you?" he cried. "And you've been lying to your mother for five years!"

"I couldn't help it, Jim. Really I couldn't. It would have broken her heart—you know it. Mother, my dear old mother, who sits all day long reading her Bible and thinking of the time when she'll join father in heaven. Mother, who believes even a good voice is a snare of the devil, unless you only sing hymns with it! You know, Jim, it would break her heart! I couldn't do it! And I *was* in service when I first came to London when father died. But the master tried to make love to me and I wouldn't let him, so he got me the sack. But he taught me something. He said I was too pretty to be a servant and I ought to go on the stage. That's how it began! And I had a real hard time, and for years my letters were true enough when I wrote to mother that I could only scrape together a few shillings to send her."

Again the young man interrupted her with a brutal laugh.

"She thinks the world of you, Illy, for pinchin' and scrapin' an' denyin' yourself to send her your little savings! And it's right enough when you say it would break her poor old heart!"

"I know — it's hateful. Now I could send her lots—make her comfortable, give her nice little dainties and treats. But I daren't, lest she might find out! And I love her, Jim; I love her dearly, an' it hurts me to write lies—and you've never told me how she is—my dear old mother!"

"She's very, very poorly," he answered, looking her full in the eyes. "I came to tell you that—to see if you couldn't get away from your harsh mistress—" Again he laughed, and the girl put out her hand, as if to ward off a blow. "I've got a message from her, Illy. She says she wants so badly to see her daughter again before she dies—her only child!"

"But I'll go to her!" the girl cried impetuously.

"You won't," he said savagely. "How can you? It would kill her. Look at yourself! Look at your hair and your eyes and your cheeks — they're all in stripes where you've been crying. No, Illy, girls like you shouldn't cry! Go to her, will you? Not if I can prevent you! Do you want to kill your mother outright — your poor old mother who thinks you're a decent, honest girl, earning an honest livelihood as becomes your station, and who prays for you every night? Go to her in those clothes; you who've been drinking that muck — holding that dirty thing in your fingers?"

The cigarette had almost burned itself out; she threw it into the grate with an angry movement.

"I'm a decent girl! I'm an honest girl!" she cried. "I've kept straight—I swear it, Jim! What if I do sing and dance for my living?"

"Like that?" His voice lashed out like a whip. He pointed to the photograph on the wall.

"I'm an honest girl!" she repeated passionately. "You're a Methody—you're all Methodies at home with your chapel-going and your hymns! You don't understand. If mother's ill I shall go to her."

"You won't! She wouldn't know you, and if she did, it'd kill her. She's weak an' feeble, an' she can't last long, but she's happy, and she's got peace in her heart. What would you give her instead? When she heard I was coming to London to pass an examination, because squire's good enough to pay for me to become an electrician, she sent for me and asked me to come an' see her little girl and see if she could manage to come down to the old home just so she could get a glimpse of her pretty face before she dies. And what do you think she'd think of your face? And she said she hoped you wasn't made to work too hard, scrubbing floors an' all that, an' that you took care of yourself this cold weather and hadn't got any chilblains on your poor little hands and feet. That's what your mother said. An' she sent you some cream for a special treat!

" But it is too good and sweet and wholesome for the likes of you," he added furiously. " Cream don't go with your drinks and smokes, and this room's enough to choke a healthy man!"

" Jim, I hate you!" the girl cried. " You're nothing but an arrant boor. I'm as good as you are any day!"

" It may be that you've escaped actual sin," he retorted sternly. " But what's your life? What are your friends? What sort of woman's shame can you keep in your heart when you stand in front of men looking like that?" Again he threw his hand out toward the photograph.

She had given a violent start; under the grotesque stripes of rouge and powder she had suddenly gone very white. The start had come when he had said—" It may be that you have escaped actual sin."

Her eyes were fixed painfully on the writing-table, almost fearfully, and then they detached themselves slowly and traveled to the mantelpiece and rested on one of the photographs there, that of a floridly handsome man, inscribed—" To my girl, from Jack."

When she looked at Jim Lanyon again her face was touched with solemnity.

" You'll let me know about mother, Jim?" she asked humbly.

" You'll come away from this, Illy?" he pleaded, and now his rough face softened and his honest eyes were full of tenderness. " You'll give it all up and come back to the old home, to the little cottage? You'll wash off all that dye and paint and take off those clothes and come and nurse your mother and be the simple country lass of the old days? You'll do this, Illy, won't you, for your mother's sake?"

But the girl shook her head.

" I couldn't, Jim," she said. " I've grown into it. It's my life. Perhaps I am bad, after all, Jim, but I couldn't give it up. Don't ask me! It only hurts! Ah, Jim, don't look so coldly at me, as if you hated me!" There were tears in her eyes; she held out her hands with a little pleading gesture. In the stress of great emotion the soft Cornish idiom came wooingly from between her lips: " Doan't 'ee, Jim! Doan't 'ee be angry with Illy!"

The young man's lips had closed like a trap; he would not meet her eyes.

" Then I'm off," he said. " I'm going back to-night. I shall tell your mother that I saw you, but only for a minute, because your mistress wanted you and had a party, or some other lie. I shall say that you are well, but you're afraid you won't be able to get away just yet. And I shall tell her that you're still our old Illy and London hasn't spoiled you a bit." His voice swelled to an angry, threatening tone. " But don't you try to come to see her. I won't allow it."

" But you'll let me know about her, Jim!" the girl pleaded, with a great sob in her throat. " You must do that!"

" Yes," he said gloomily; " I suppose I must do that."

With that he turned on his heel and left her. Ilaria's maid came in with the postal order and the change.

Ilaria took them mechanically.

" Get my dinner quickly, Cora," she said, brushing her hand over her eyes. " I'm late, and I must write another letter before I go. And—Cora—I'm not going away to-morrow, after all."

" Oh!" exclaimed the maid. The sound came from her lips like a pistol-shot. She gave a quick, sharp glance at her mistress's face and went out, grinning furtively.

" They've quarreled," she told herself, " or she's funking it. That's funny. And yet it wasn't 'im I met on the stairs. Rummy lot, these hartistes!"

Ilaria sat down again at the little writing-table. First of all she added a postscript to her mother's letter.

> Saw Jim Lanyon just now. Thanks ever so much for your message and cream. Only had a minute's chat with him in the scullery, as the cook was in the kitchen. Jim looks fine. Shall try and come down very soon. Dearest love.
>
> YOUR LITTLE ILLY.

She enclosed the postal order, fastened the envelope, and addressed it.

Then she began to cry and took a fresh piece of note-paper. She could hardly see at first; the tears streamed down her face, but she wrote steadily.

My dear Jack:

I'm writing to tell you that I've changed my mind and I'm not coming with you to-morrow to the south of France. I'm afraid you'll be very angry with me and think me an awful fool for not knowing my own mind when we've made all our preparations, but I'm going to tell you the truth, because I believe that although you want me to go away with you and can't marry me because you're a gentleman and I'm only a poor little music-hall singer and a fisherman's daughter, you're really a good sort, and perhaps you will understand.

I don't think I really knew what I was doing. I did so want a holiday, and you told me such lovely things about Monte Carlo, and it all fitted in so nicely, my contract with the syndicate being just up to-night and our coming back just in time for my engagement in the panto, and I'd got awfully fond of you and all that. But it's no good talking about that now, because I'm not going.

Jack, I've been deceiving my poor old mother all this time, for nearly five years. She lives in a tiny white cottage by the sea in Cornwall, and she is very strict and all that, and she does nothing but read her Bible and pray, and I knew it would break her heart if she knew what I was doing, so I've been pretending I was a servant—a housemaid. You see, down there some people don't understand, and my mother is one of them and thinks that everything connected with the stage—even Shakespeare—is a wile of the devil and all that. Of course, it isn't true, because a girl can be as decent and honest in the halls as anywhere else. And that's what I'm going to try to be; so that even if she knew—which I hope she never will, because she's very feeble and old now, and Jim Lanyon, a friend, who was here to-day, says it would kill her—she wouldn't really need to be ashamed of me, because even though I do dance and sing, I'm going to try to be a good girl and run straight all my life.

So, you see, I can't go with you. Please don't try to persuade me, because it won't be any good, and I don't feel I could see you just for a little while, please Jack.

Yours very sincerely,
Ilaria Blewett.

She had stopped crying when she addressed the envelope, but there were little drawn lines around her pretty mouth and her eyes looked with a dull, hard stare straight in front of her. She went into the tiny hall and rang up a messenger-boy. There was an office quite close, and her summons was soon answered.

She gave the letter into the boy's hands, giving him sixpence for himself.

"Wait for an answer, mum?" he asked, touching his cap.

"No," she said abstractedly. "There's no answer."

She hurried into her bedroom to wash her face before she rushed through her dinner and on to the Hilarity.

As she plunged her burning cheeks into a basin of cold water, heedless of the time it would take to make them up again, she heard a boy's shrill voice in the street yelling out part of the refrain of her famous song:

"She'll break your silly heart, my boy, for certain;
She'll never think of nothin' else but flirtin';
She'll never wash a blanket or a curtain—
So take my tip, boys—and let her go!"

ON THE WAY

Love and I met yesterday—yesterday, where roses blow;
I was going down the way when I saw him draw his bow.

Love is such an arrant cheat, Love is such a marksman true,
And his arrows are so fleet that I knew not what to do.

"Prithee! Prithee! Love!" I prayed, "keep thy arrows for a space!"
But he only laughed and said: "Nay, thou hast too fair a face!"

"Prithee! Prithee! Love!" I chaffed, "for I would not halting go!"
But he only drew and laughed: "I to spare thee! Nay, not so!"

So he sped his arrow true, and I felt the poisoned dart
As it pierced me through and through—felt its sweetness in my heart.

Ah, Love's poison is so sweet, though the sweetness is such pain,
Down the rose-wreathed path to meet saucy Love I go again.

Celia Myrover Robinson

THE POSTER CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALCOHOL

A UNIQUE PLAN OF COMPELLING THE DRINKING MAN TO THINK

BY MICHAEL CALLAHAN

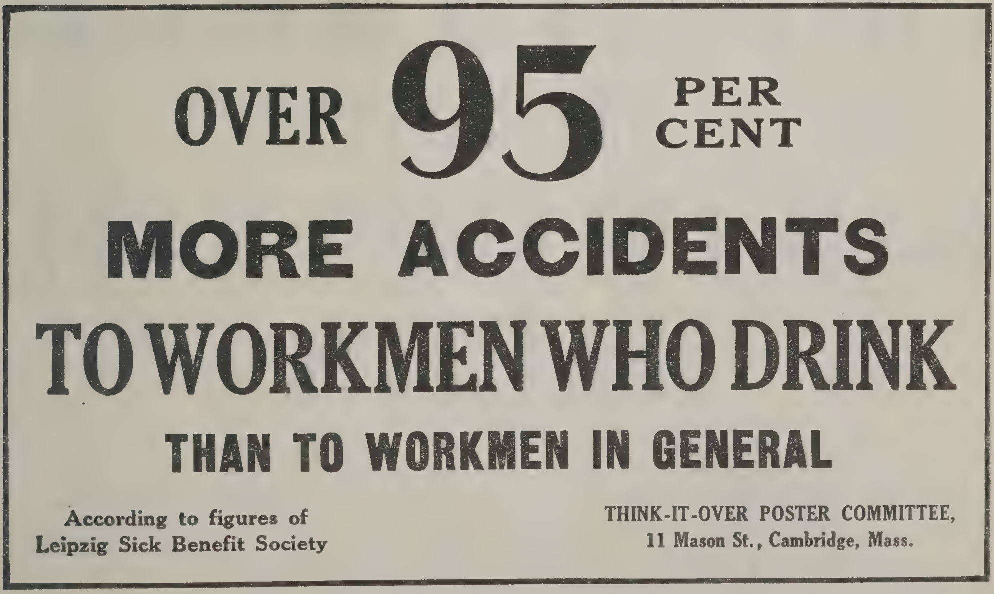
BOSTON is to-day the center of a unique temperance campaign, one of the most remarkable in the history of the country—A POSTER CAMPAIGN.

Alcohol has been attacked for many years from a thousand angles. The poster campaign is something entirely new, and is said to be already astonishingly successful. It was started in a small way in Boston in April last year.

Now it has a well-equipped organization back of it, prominent in which are many leading physicians of Boston and the best thinkers of that city and Cambridge—men who have made a comprehensive study of the effects of the use of alcohol and particularly the fruitage of the alcohol habit. Reproduced herewith are miniature facsimiles of some of the posters that have been used.

The idea of these posters is to make men think. To ATTACK the alcohol habit is to bring out a feeling of resentment, the resentment of inherent rights. But to make men think, to reason, to work out the problem for themselves, and to work it out free from prejudice, is quite another matter.

Men have always felt, since temperance crusades began, that these crusades were



OVER 95 PER CENT

MORE ACCIDENTS

TO WORKMEN WHO DRINK

THAN TO WORKMEN IN GENERAL

According to figures of
Leipzig Sick Benefit Society

THINK-IT-OVER POSTER COMMITTEE,
11 Mason St., Cambridge, Mass.

TO THE THINKING MAN!

OUR PRISON COMMISSION REPORTS

95%

OF THOSE

IMPRISONED

IN 1911

HAD INTEMPERATE HABITS

SEE REPORT OF
BOARD OF PRISON COMMISSIONERS,
MASS., 1911.

POSTER COMMITTEE,
BOSTON.

aimed at their personal liberty, that they had a right to determine for themselves whether they wanted to drink or to abstain from drink, and that in the matter of the use of alcohol temperance crusaders were not in any sense their brothers' keepers. When men resent an attack they are not open, freely open, to being convinced. They stand braced against the contention and summon every argument to buttress their position.

The poster campaign does little to awaken this feeling of resentment, and probably in its best form would do nothing at all. Holding strictly to the idea of making men think without awakening prejudice is and should be its key-note. With these posters plastered on bill-boards, on trees, on old buildings, on fences, and even private residences, the alcohol problem is forced home upon men, so forced home that they are compelled to think, and in thought there is safety.

It is a singular fact that a constant repetition of a statement or a question, confronting one everywhere, on every corner, at every turn, on every bill-board, so forces itself into the mind that it compels discussion both with oneself and with others.

In the inception of this poster campaign a poster was placed on the corner of a house on Charles Street, Boston. It attracted so much attention that all the newspapers sent representatives to photograph the house and the poster and wrote generous accounts of the results of that first move in a new phase of awakening public thought on the alcohol question.

This single poster, starting in its modest fashion, unheralded, has, well within the scope of a year, found its way all over America, not necessarily to every town, but to many towns throughout the whole country.

At this writing it is impossible to predict the ultimate effectiveness of the poster campaign against the use of alcohol. It is

Who is the first man to be laid off,
and the last man to be taken on?
THE MAN WHO DRINKS.

11 Mason St., Cambridge, Mass.

not a crusade, but rather an ingenious and common-sense method of bringing the drink question home to every man. And because of this ingenuity and simplicity, and because of the lack of arousing individual resentment on the part of men who look upon themselves as masters of themselves, it bids fair to do a work that other methods of temperance advocacy have failed to accomplish. It is only fair, however, to say that there is a time for everything, and that the temperance view-point having been carried as far as it has been, has made the effectiveness of the poster campaign possible. In other words, in the early days of temperance warfare, in the days of Henry Ward Beecher and John B. Gough, the general public was not sufficiently alive to the dangers and injury from the drink habit to be awakened by a poster campaign as it now is by the present one.

The effect of the rum habit is a known thing to-day, a scientifically known thing. It can be weighed and measured as coal or grain can be weighed and measured, and the answer determined with equal certainty.

ALCOHOL!

◆

THE PUBLIC MAY THINK:---

It is only Heavy Drinking that harms.

EXPERIMENTS SHOW:---

That even Moderate Drinking Injures Health, Lessens Efficiency.

THE PUBLIC MAY THINK:---

Alcohol braces us for hard work and lessens fatigue.

EXPERIMENTS SHOW:---

That ALCOHOL IN NO WAY INCREASES MUSCULAR STRENGTH OR ENDURANCE.

ALCOHOL LOWERS VITALITY; ALCOHOL OPENS THE DOOR TO DISEASE.

At the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, the use of Alcohol as a medicine declined 77 per cent in eight years.

Most Modern Hospitals show the same tendency.

THINK IT OVER!

THE SHOP

I THINK you will be interested to know that MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE made an increase in circulation of approximately 70,000 copies on the December issue alone. The figures are not yet all in, so it is impossible to state with positive accuracy the exact sale, but this is just about what the gain was.

A gain of 70,000 copies on a single issue of a magazine, representing 70,000 new voluntary purchasers, is in itself something very big, but vastly bigger is the indorsement it gives to a NEW IDEA. In catering to the public, and especially to a nation-wide public, the magazine publisher tries out many ideas, few of which, I regret to say, ever count for anything. But it is a part of the job and must be done.

The splendid success MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE has already attained with its complete book-length novel fully justifies me in the statement I made in a recent issue of THE MUNSEY that the publication of a complete book in each issue of a magazine —a standard illustrated magazine—solved the magazine problem. It likewise established MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE as again a successful pioneer in a new and bigger field of magazine-making.

Recently I have been looking over the early files of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. It was indeed a tiny thing, twenty years ago, as compared with its present huge size.

If magazines twenty years ago had been on the scale of THE MUNSEY of to-day, with its present average of 230 reading pages, I frankly say that without capital or backing—and I didn't have a dollar's backing—I could never have got started as a magazine publisher.

Then it cost us to go to press, that is, to get the plates ready to begin printing, something like a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars. To-day the cost is ten or fifteen times as much. In fact, the cost of putting MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE to press for the year 1914 will average approximately twenty thousand dollars a number —practically a quarter of a million dollars for twelve issues. This does not include a pound of paper, and does not include the presswork or binding.

It covers merely the fiction, the articles, the illustrations, the editorial and art work, and the typesetting and electrotyping, with the overhead charges of these departments. The paper, the presswork, the binding, the handling, the shipping, and the freight and postage aggregate vastly bigger figures.

* * * * *

Twenty years ago I thought it a man's work to publish the kind of magazine we were then issuing. But it was a boy's job as compared with the magazine we are getting out now. In size it contained just about half the number of reading pages, and it was mainly written in the office by two or three of us—written and edited.

But even then, small as it was and relatively inexpensive as it was to make, it gave the people of that day what they wanted, and gave it to them at a right price, with the result that it almost instantly sprang into a world-wide circulation, a circulation so much bigger than any other magazine had ever attained that it made previous circulation records mere pygmies beside it.

To make sure of being accurate, I have just looked up the issue of October, 1893 —twenty years ago — which shows one hundred and fourteen reading pages. The present issue of this magazine contains two hundred and thirty-four pages, one hundred and twenty pages more than at that time and six pages more than double the number. And, by the way, this is well-nigh double the size in reading pages of most of the magazines of to-day, standard illustrated magazines, I mean. Apart from all-fiction monthlies, there isn't a magazine in the world in size anything like THE MUNSEY of to-day.

For the last dozen years I should say it has averaged to carry about one hundred and forty pages. With the exception of *Harper's* and *Century,* which are thirty-five-cent magazines and which usually contain one hundred and sixty pages of reading matter, THE MUNSEY has been conspicuously larger than most other magazines. The recent increase to its present size was made necessary by the publication of the complete book-length novel.

Giving a full novel in a single issue of a magazine changes the whole scheme of magazine-making. It doubles up the size of the magazine and more than doubles up the cost of going to press. And, too, the cost of making—cost of white paper, press-work and binding—is again doubled up, as every ounce of printing paper costs real money. And every bit of additional labor costs real money. And as the government fixes its charges for carriage on the weight of a magazine, the cost of carriage is still again doubled up.

I remember very well when I paid Hall Caine twenty-five hundred dollars for the serial rights of " The Christian " it seemed to me a top-lofty price. And so it was as compared with what we had hitherto paid for serial stories. Up to that time I doubt if we had ever paid more than one thousand dollars for the serial rights of a story, so in a relative sense it was some price.

But things have changed a bit since then. Instead of twenty-five hundred dollars, we should now have to pay Hall Caine, or a man of his reputation, many times this amount for a story like " The Christian " and of equal length.

We began the publication of " The Christian " in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE in November, 1896, and finished it in January, 1898, which means that it ran through fifteen numbers. The cost of " The Christian " per number, therefore, was only one hundred and sixty-six dollars and sixty-six cents—not so very much in the light of what it would cost to publish a similar story complete in one issue, as we now publish our novels. Then we averaged to give about two novels a year, and now we give twelve.

But the new MUNSEY MAGAZINE is giving a lot of attention to other matters as well as to its big single feature, the complete novel. It is giving more articles of point and punch—articles of red blood and human interest—than it has ever given before. And it is spending more money on illustrations and giving more illustrations than it has ever given at any other time in its history.

* * * * *

We have received two or three letters graciously controverting our statement that we have brought a new idea into magazine publishing in respect to the complete book-length novel. I am glad the point has been raised, furnishing, as it does, occasion for making the matter clear. These letters call our attention to *Lippincott's Magazine,* which has for many years published novelettes, as do many all-fiction magazines.

But there is relatively as much difference between a novelette and a full-sized book story as there is between a short story and a novelette. A novelette ranges all the way from twenty thousand to forty thousand words. Rarely would a novelette go beyond forty thousand words, and the average length with magazines publishing novelettes would be about thirty thousand words.

A novelette is a kind of elongated short story, or a dwarfed long story. The average length of a book novel is approximately one hundred thousand words. Some are shorter and some much longer than that, but the shortest would be more than twice the length of the average novelette.

I have not seen every issue of *Lippincott's,* so do not know to a certainty that it may not have had an occasional story of a considerable length. But I think I am accurate in the assumption that it does not now publish and never has published novels approximating one hundred thousand words in length.

Even if it does, my statement in a former issue of this magazine would hold true, for the reason that it pertained to and distinctly said " standard illustrated magazines "—not unillustrated magazines. Of the unillustrated magazines and all-fiction type of magazines, we ourselves publish two that carry full book-length novels —*The Argosy* and *The All-Story Magazine.* But these are not at all the same thing as a standard type of illustrated magazine.

* * * * *

Now that we are on this question of complete novels, I want to emphasize the fact that a novelette cannot properly be called a novel, meaning a story of ordinary book length. Not a few publications that carry novelettes speak of them as complete novels. In fact, we ourselves were guilty of the same thing when we carried novelettes in *The Argosy* and *The All-Story Magazine,* speaking of them as complete novels.

I don't think we did this with the intention of misleading the public any more than I think other publishers, now calling novelettes complete novels, do it to mislead the public. We fell into the way of doing it, I assume, without analyzing the accuracy of the statement. But an analysis of the facts makes plain that in a strict sense, or even in a very elastic sense, the novelette cannot be called a novel.

So it stands that MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, among the standard illustrated magazines, is the first and only magazine to publish full-length book novels. And it stands, too, that the only other magazines now publishing full book-length novels are *The Argosy* and *The All-Story,* both our magazines. To let you in on a secret, these two magazines were the dogs on which we tried out the book-length novel before committing THE MUNSEY to the idea.

While we are on this question of novels, I want to tell you about one we have just bought from Sir Gilbert Parker, entitled " You Never Know Your Luck." It is scheduled to appear in the April issue of this magazine. I say I want to tell you about it, but instead of telling you myself I am going to let Bob Davis tell you, and tell you in his own characteristic way. He has read the story and knows all about it. I haven't yet read it, but you can bank on what he says.

Bob Davis is at the head of our fiction bureau, a very important bureau, by the way, buying, as we do, over a million words of fiction a month. But he is a good deal more than the head of the fiction department. He is, as well, an associate editor all over the place.

In dignified parlance, Bob Davis is Robert Hobart Davis, but just plain Bob fits him a good deal better, and is atmospherically the man himself. He not only dominates our fiction department, but is also a well-known writer. Every now and again his pen emits sparks of genius and we get something deliciously worth while.

He began his career at the type-case, that great school from which so many of our men of letters have graduated. He served a wide apprenticeship in daily journalism in both San Francisco and New York. He is an all-round, well-trained literary man—a playwright, a poet, and a letter-writer of wide repute. His announcements of stories are unique. For example, see page 234 of this issue—his announcement of "The Lone Wolf." Then come back and read here what he says of Sir Gilbert Parker's novel.

> Not since "The Right of Way," that came out in 1901 and which swept the author into universal fame, has Sir Gilbert Parker written so fine a book as "You Never Know Your Luck."
>
> The scene is laid in Canada, in one of those wonderful valleys where peak and pine merge with the rippling grain, and rivers wed the meadows. It is a story of big impulses, ennobling love, splendid sacrifices, and immortal deeds. Only upon an outdoor canvas could Sir Gilbert have painted this heroic romance—redolent of the spring, boisterous with the high winds, soft as the voices of summer-time, rippling as the brook on the hillside.
>
> The plot is simple.
>
> An Englishman, under the blight of the gambler's curse, loses his fortune and his wife's love. She has written him a letter, the which, because of his guilty conscience, he deems to be a harsh farewell. He takes this letter with him into the fastnesses of Canada and for five years he dare not open it. The cross he bears is made heavier by divers and sundry events that present themselves in his new life, not the least of which is another woman.
>
> Who, other than Parker, could have braided these elements into fiction with more skilful weaving? He has not written in all his career as a novelist a more alluring tale, each chapter of which slips by like a panorama.

* * * * *

One word more. I have just looked over *Lippincott's Magazine* for January. I find it to be much the same, almost precisely the same magazine it has been for more than a quarter of a century. I find that its long story IS A NOVELETTE—NOT A FULL BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL—a novelette of about 40,000 words. I find it has 128 reading pages, which carry a total of about 70,000 words against the 230 reading pages of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE which carry over 180,000 words. I find that with the exception of two or three brief articles it is purely and wholly a fiction magazine—a fiction magazine at the price of twenty-five cents. I find it is an unillustrated magazine, as in the past, and as I assumed it to be. And I find, too, that in the index the magazine itself lists its long story as a novelette.

In view of the foregoing, I submit that my statement as to THE MUNSEY—a standard illustrated magazine—pioneering in the publication of a full book-length novel is correct, strictly correct. What I am saying here about *Lippincott's Magazine* is said neither to boom nor to criticise it, but merely as an answer to the two or three queries or criticisms to which, in this talk, I have already referred.

FRANK A. MUNSEY

INTIMATE SILENCES

NOT what we said—but what we left unsaid,
  O friend the best, I cherish through the days;
Those sacred moments when, the sunlight fled,
  We sat before the glowing hearth's bright blaze,
And, needing not vain words, found Life's lost key
  In quiet that made all the world seem true;
Oh, in those hours how much you meant to me. . . .
  Your silence told me what I meant to you.

Charles Hanson Towne

A FERVID VISION OF AMERICA

BY FRANCIS GRIERSON

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE publishes this somewhat florid picture by Mr. Grierson, more as a poetic vision than as a well-buttressed prophecy on the reshaping of the world through the opening of the Panama Canal. Mr. Grierson is an Englishman. It is well to record this fact else some captious reader might fancy him a slightly prejudiced pro-American.—THE EDITOR.

THE Panama Canal is the last and the greatest of the world's wonders. Up to the present the wonders of the world have been tombs, temples, and works like the Roman Colosseum and the Suez Canal. None of them, except the Suez Canal, changed the current of commerce. Some of them, like the Colosseum, inaugurated the decline of national prestige and the decadence of national power.

We are in the midst of the greatest world-changes since the break-up of the Roman Empire. The romance of reality laughs at the realism of mere fact and figures, and leaves men wondering that they did not divine the miracle about to happen. After the triumph of Japan in war, after the triumph of republicanism in China, we have the triumph of the mountaineers of the Balkans — phenomenal manifestations in the social and military world which no living diplomat had the vision to predict.

These things are now matters of history, but things are about to occur that will amaze the most astute diplomats and statesmen of the world. The awakening of the two Americas has begun, and somnolent Europe will hardly have the time to realize the dynamic potencies of the new West that stretches beyond the precincts of Central America. While all the world has been harping on the awakening of the East, no one, as yet, has been able to foretell the miracles that will follow the realization of a dream turned to reality.

America was already the granary of the world, but the Panama Canal is destined to make her the intellectual nursery of the world. Europe will discover a new America. Texas and California will have a new birth, a new rhythm of life. California, from one end to the other, will now enter into full possession of all those opportunities and faculties which were destined to be hers from the beginning. It will not be a reawakening; California was never asleep since the discovery of gold in her hills and mountains; it will simply be a rechristening.

A new type of humanity will come into being. A new order of talent and genius will develop in a climate that contains much of the magnetic quality of the climates of Egypt and Greece, with material privileges far surpassing anything known to the ancient inhabitants of those countries. With the opening of the wonderful canal a new current of intellectual activities will begin to flow from the north to the south and from the east to the west. Physical energy will continue to supply Canada with workers, but the intellectual energy will be attracted to the southern portion of the continent, and Canada will remain as a land of expansion for people who do not mind living in a country where the winters are long. Not only will the great canal bring a new current of electric life to Mexico and the South and West, but the whole country will feel the throb of psychic vitality; mysteriously at first, because the vital energy in the beginning will only be apparent to the commercial and financial onlooker; it will soon be seen what magic resides in the hills and plateaus of certain portions of that great tract beginning at the Rio Grande and stretching as far west as California.

There will be a new manifestation of intellectual power for the English-speaking races in all that country from Texas to the Pacific, but particularly where the air is dry and the magnetic currents flow from mountainous regions. Wealthy people will erect villas on the mountain slopes of the new El Dorados, and all along the railroads towns and health resorts will spring into activity, while irrigation will make vast sections of the desert blossom like the rose.

In nature a readjustment of material and spiritual forces is always going on. The paradox of opposites is always occurring; the things which no one expects are the inevitable things. No one expected a new Japan or a new China, and Europe had ceased to think of Panama. No one but the seer is ever ready for readjustments.

WITH CLASH OF ARMS

Where is the politician or statesman who can see that the temperament and genius of ancient Egypt and Greece will be repeated with a new scale of values, under new conditions, in those parts of the Americas favored by climate, altitude, magnetic air currents, and a new realization of psychic laws? There will be a scramble for military power, and great battles will be fought in or near the Gulf of Mexico. Asia and Europe will try their hand at new conquests in the southern El Dorados of the two Americas, and the United States will soon need a navy twice as powerful as the present one. Intrigues will be set on foot by foreign powers to embroil America in political and social complications in the hope that while she is occupied with strifes within the opportunity may occur to seize Mexico or Central America or the northern part of South America.

Great political and social changes will occur in all parts of Africa during the next two decades, but they will be insignificant compared with the startling events that are bound to develop out of the new conditions, both geographical and social, consequent on the opening of the Panama Canal. History repeats itself in cycles. There will be much the same excitement and enthusiasm manifest as there was when Columbus returned to Spain with the news that his dream-voyage of discovery had turned into a golden reality. There will come a period when from all the leading countries of Europe the outrush of emigration will resemble the sweep of a tidal-wave. The thing will happen that happened to Ireland, Portugal, Poland, Scotland, Holland—the brightest young men of England, Germany, and France will be attracted to the new El Dorados of the two Americas; the old and the lazy young people will be left behind.

Not only will there be a spiritual incentive for emigration from the great nations of Europe; there will also be a material and geographical incentive. Russian ascendency in the near Orient will make it impossible for the Teutonic races to extend their territories much farther east. On the other hand, Russia is the only European nation which is not attracted beyond her own geographical parallels. Persia, India, and Mongolia are her magnets of attraction. Russia will remain vigorous because she is not being drained of her best young men.

What will happen now that a new empire is about to throw open its golden gates at Panama and permit the ships of the world to pass on to that other Golden Gate farther up the Pacific coast? On the opening day a magic circle, far more potent than any girdle alluded to by *Puck* in " A Midsummer Night's Dream," will pass around the globe and send a new thrill through every philosopher, scientist, statesman, artist, and poet. On that day the floods of a new civilization will begin to sweep away the remnants of barbarism left by the Aztecs and the Toltecs. Then will begin the greatest cycle of spiritual evolution since 1492, the greatest cycle of commercial expansion since the opening of the Suez Canal, and the greatest movement of human interest since the conquering of Gaul and Britain by Julius Cæsar.

A NEW ART AND LITERATURE

America is only now harvesting her first crop of transatlantic temperaments, and it is this crop that will create for this country a new art and a new literature. Because of its cosmopolitanism it is the most wonderful combination of social elements ever witnessed in any country. This cosmopolitan culture will overbalance provincial characteristics, and the new conditions will transform American art and letters.

English literature is undergoing a process of dry rot for want of a foreign literary element, while America is putting forth new buds on the tree of intellect because the roots of the tree are sound, the soil is fertile, the intellectual atmosphere genial. The new America will be a combination of Germanic, Latin, and Celtic elements, with the English language as a groundwork for the divers structures. America will give atmosphere, opportunity, and originality. There will never be a second Longfellow or a second Emerson; but an American Goethe is a future possibility.

YOUTH WILL BE SERVED

The wonder of it all lies in the fact that this English-speaking America is not even now dominated by English thought, but by Continental European thought. It is now not a question of what elderly writers are saying, but a question of what young people in America are saying. Any one with half an eye can see from which side the tide is rising.

Almost all American writers of the past had to think and work on a basis of provincialism more or less pronounced, and what many of them took to be culture had as much relation to the real article as a Japanese dwarf tree has to an English oak; but now a wonderful thing has happened; the young thinkers and artists of the great cities find themselves in the midst of the most cosmopolitan culture the world has ever known, the fruit of many languages and divers conditions without a Tower of Babel incoherence, since English is the accepted medium of expression and common to all.

The new spirit in America is beginning to ignore sectionalism. The old provincial humor made fun of all forms of art which it could not understand; it ridiculed by emphasis and *naïf* exaggeration. It was what the populace wanted to embody their dislike of European culture, for somehow the masses seemed to think sound democracy could not go hand in hand with critical intelligence; hence the word "art" sounded in most ears as something unpatriotic, mysterious, dangerous. French literature went on all fours with frogs' legs, Germany stood for lager-beer, and Italy was a synonym for Bologna, and Bologna stood for a sausage, and the unwritten law was touch not, taste not, handle not.

To Continental Europeans it was all strange and paradoxical. The culture of an Emerson, which appeared to many Americans far-fetched and unnatural in the year 1860, is surpassed in the twentieth century by a catholicity of tastes and interests which makes the old Puritan notions of art, literature, and philosophy seem primitive to the point of illiteracy.

A new era is dawning for all humanity. The material prosperity which the opening of the great canal will usher in for vast new sections of the world will be overshadowed by the supreme superiority of the new psychic conditions created by the material out of which a new empire of transcendental genius will arise.

HERE

Here, where no joy is ever sure
And tired hands dissever,
I dream of raptures that endure
Forever.

Here, where the sunlight and the mist
Are lost in night together,
I dream of rainbows that persist
Forever.

Here, where October leaves the plain
And passes from the river,
I dream of Aprils that remain
Forever.

Here, where the present joins the past
And dead things rise up never,
I dream of lightning that shall last
Forever.

Edgar Saltus

LIGHT VERSE

AN ELECTRIC SIGN

O SWEETHEART, thou art dear to me—
Ten thousand amperes dear!
Thine eyes are incandescent lights,
So luminous and clear.
Thine amber locks electrify
Whene'er they brush my cheek.
Fair maid, pray give me but a sign
That I my love may speak.

My arm about her waist I stole—
The circuit was complete.
And thus, by wireless means, I sought
My message to repeat.
She turned the current of her thoughts
On me without ado.
No wonder when she gave the sign
It proved electric, too!

Blanche Elizabeth Wade

THE AUDIT

HER father was a business man—
The kind of modern god
That scratched a record every night
I called on daughter Maud.
He kept a time-sheet—every eve
I came around to call
He marked the hour I came and went
And hung it on the wall.

Every good cigar I smoked
He tallied up on me,
And every lunch and auto ride,
And every cup of tea;
Till, ah, at last! it dawned on me—
He wished to know, I saw,
Just what the cost would be when I
Became his son-in-law!

Her father was a business man—
One quiet night he sent
For me, and said: "Well now, young man,
Let's have a settlement:
For wear on rugs—$10.98,
For dinners, gas, and teas,
Cigars, and use of limousine
$100—please!"

Aloysius Coll

MOVING PICTURES

"YOUR picture in my heart I wear,
I love your eyes and curls."
Then off he bowled,
The same thing told
To twenty other girls.
She found him out, and sent a note,
And told him they must part;
"It seems to me
That yours must be
A moving-picture heart."

Walter E. Shannon

A BALLAD OF THE SKIRT

WHERE are the skirts of yesterday?
Where are their frills and flutings gone?
Have all their ripples passed away?
Are we with plaits forever done?
Where is that ancient hoop-skirt spawn,
Sport of the flippant brush and pen?
And the kilted one—perchance in pawn!
Shall we ever see their like again?
Where now does the nine-gored garment stay,
And the one with the plaits accordion?
If we wore it now we should be some jay!
Where's the bustle-back that we all must shun?
Is their erstwhile vogue forever won
By the trouser-skirt we've swiped from men?
Will ever the times restore their run?
Shall we ever see their like again?

ENVOY

Dames, ages hence will Fashion say,
Speaking of skirts that now do reign:
"Hobbled or slit in *outré* way,
Shall we ever see their like again?"

Susie M. Best

A LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

(WITH MENTAL RESERVATIONS)

MY DARLING MADGE:
The bonbon dish was dear;
(*Dear!* Humph, it was the cheapest thing I got!)
I wanted one so much—how did you hear?
(The cat! Of course she knows that I did not.)
The pattern's lovely, and the cut so new,
(I simply loathe that stiff, *passé* design!)
Your dainty gift stirs sweetest thoughts of you,
(How must she feel comparing it to mine?)
Somehow, you always send the things that please.
(Her lack of judgment really gets me vexed.)
Your friend, devoted and sincere,
Louise.
(Oh, joy, that letter's done! Let's see—who's next?)

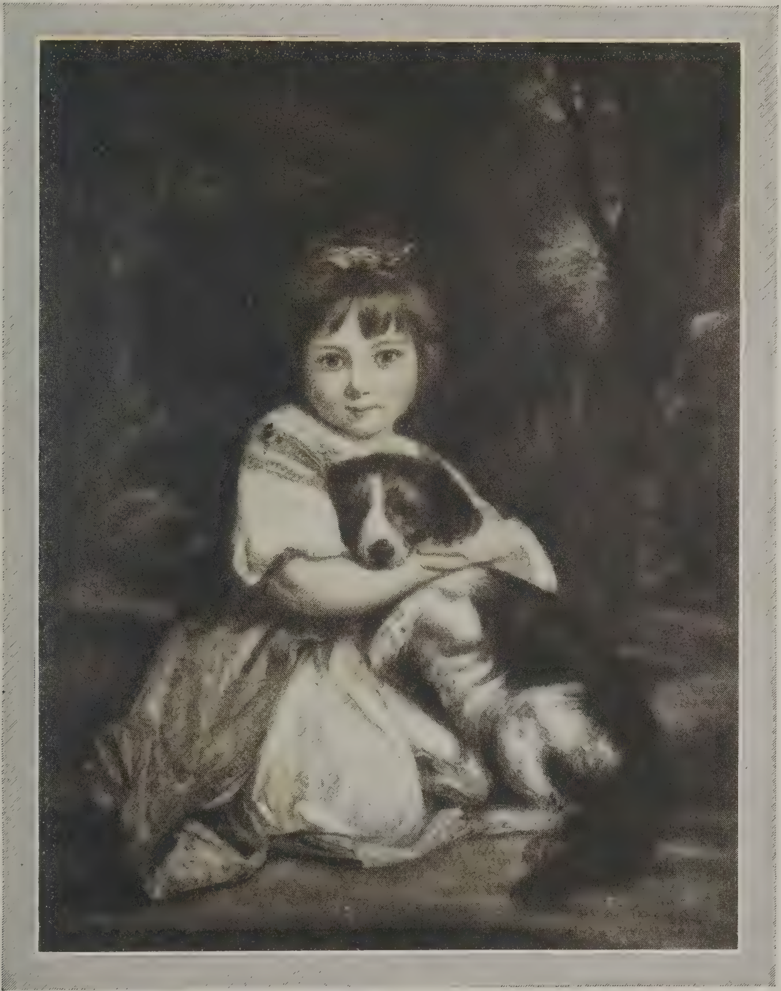
Ella Bentley Arthur

CHILDREN IN PAINTINGS

(THIRD PAPER: SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS)

BY CLAYTON HAMILTON

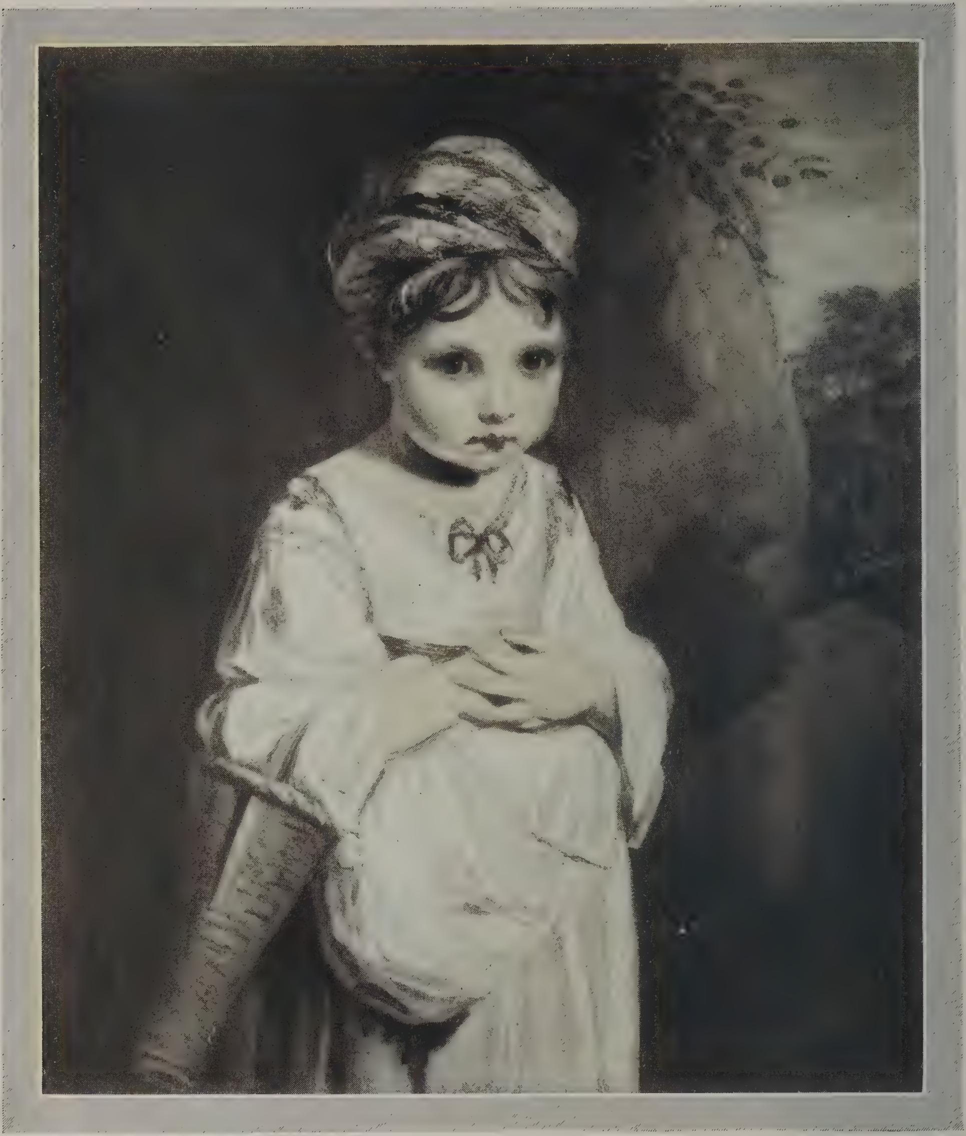
THREE centuries ago the word "gentle"—as it was used in the first line of the "Faerie Queene"—still bore a double meaning and had not yet been divided into "gentle" and "genteel." It was applied to people of noble birth, both to signify their honorable lineage and to suggest that suavity



PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., NEW YORK

"MISS BOWLES"

From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds



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"THE STRAWBERRY GIRL"

In the Wallace Collection, London. From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

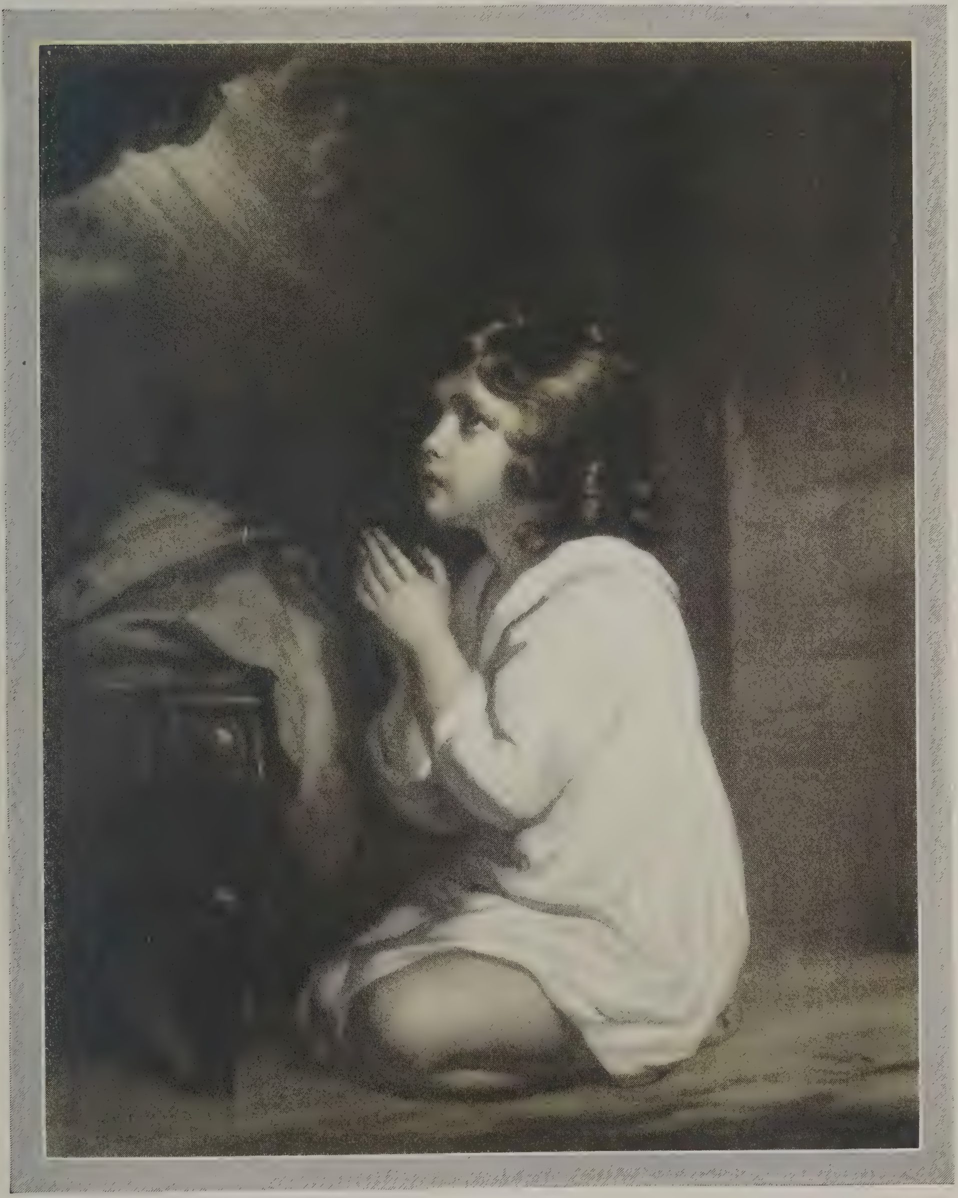
of demeanor which was the emblem of their aristocracy. Employed with this medieval meaning, there is no other adjective so apt as "gentle" to describe the art of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Particularly in his paintings of children, he exhibits that gentility of mood which is synonymous with gentleness.

Reynolds was a representative of the most aristocratic age of English history—a century that made a profession of politeness. Our social relations may be more human nowadays, but they are less consciously and carefully urbane. In the years that preceded the democratic revolutions in America and France it was considered more desirable to be a fine gentleman than to be a serviceable man. Of this elegant and artificial period Reynolds has left us an invaluable record in his gallery of over four thousand portraits.

His men are all gentlemen, his women

are all ladies, and his children are all aristocrats in miniature. We can never imagine these perfect little models of good breeding as crying or kicking or soiling their clothes or getting into mischief or needing to have their noses blown. Their birth is gentle, in the medieval sense, and their demeanor gentle, in the modern.

Reynolds himself was not born a gentleman; he was the son of a schoolmaster in a little town in Devon; but he lifted himself to a position of leadership in London society by a persistent application to his art and by the sagacious conduct of his life. When he was only a little boy he said to his father: "I'll be a painter if you'll give me a chance to be quite a good one." The chance came when an early



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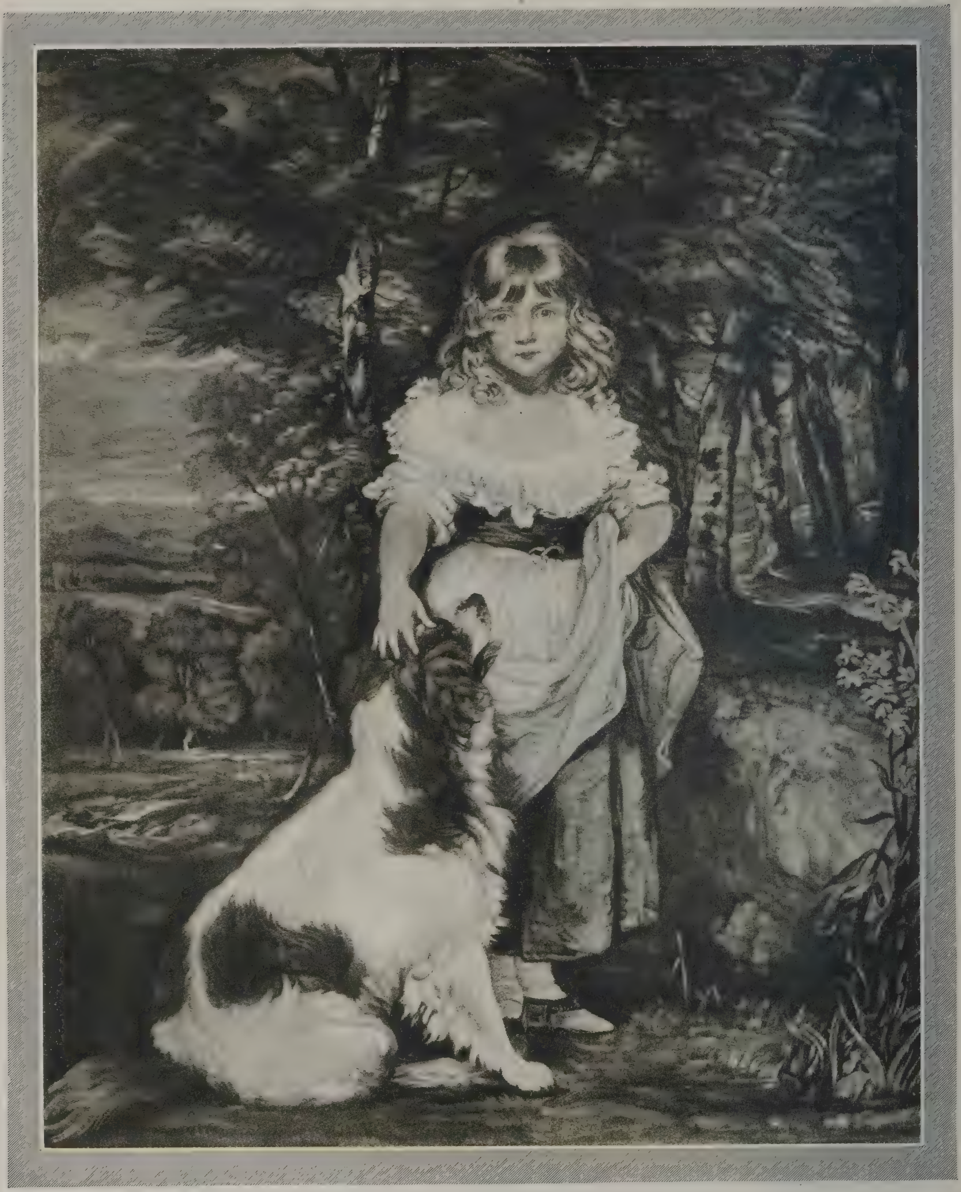
"SAMUEL"

From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds



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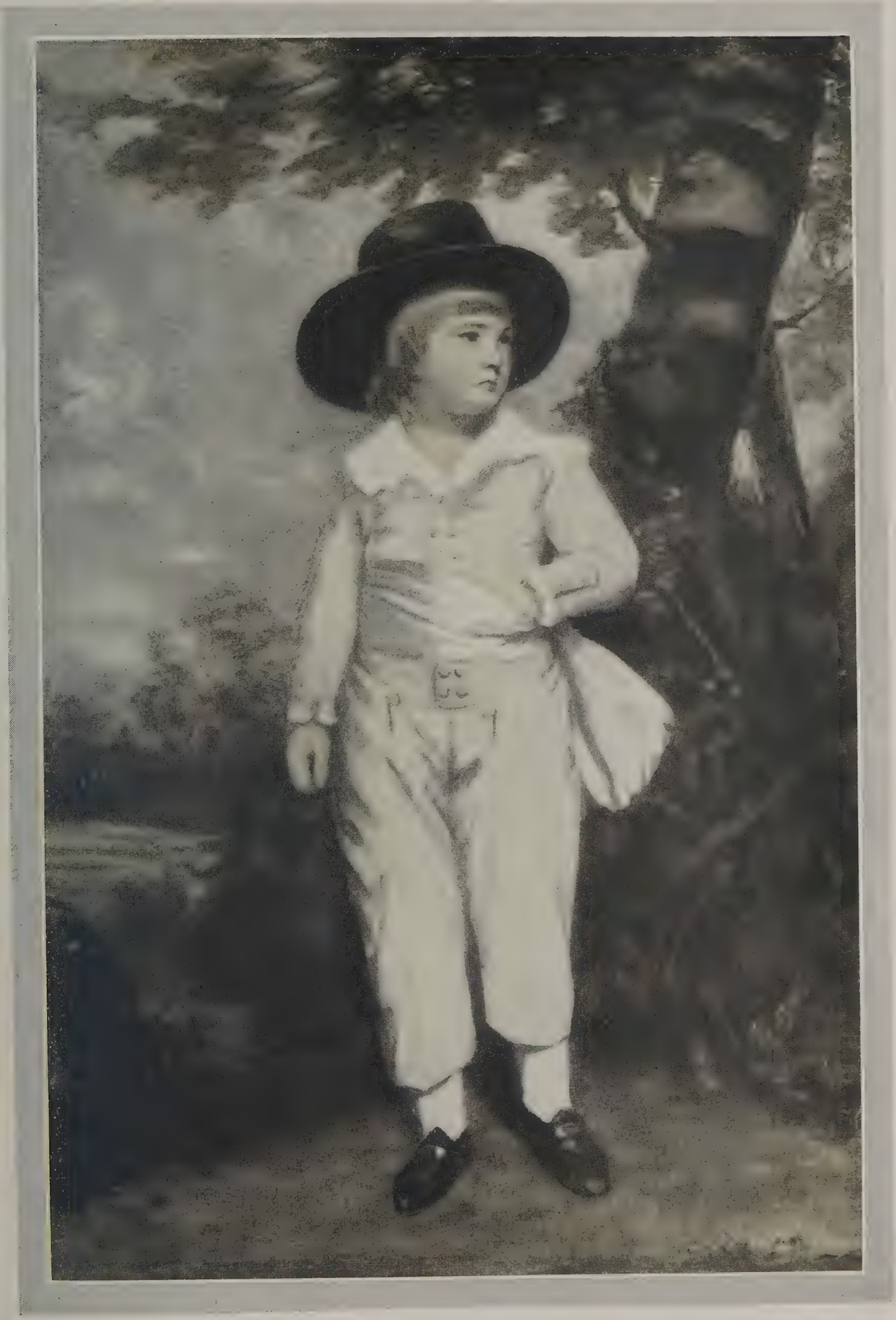
"MISS HARRIS"

From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

patron introduced him to Commodore Keppel, who, on receiving a Mediterranean command, invited the young aspirant to accompany him to Italy.

Reynolds spent three years in Rome, Venice, Padua, Milan, and Paris, studying the great works of the greatest painters. It is not surprising that his ultimate technique impresses us as scholarly instead of novel. But Reynolds was eclectic. He learned the elements of his own craft from masters so diverse as Michelangelo and Raphael, Titian and Tintoretto, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyke; even the now despised Guercino taught him some secrets of grace in drawing; and all these elements he coordinated into a style that is consummately his own.



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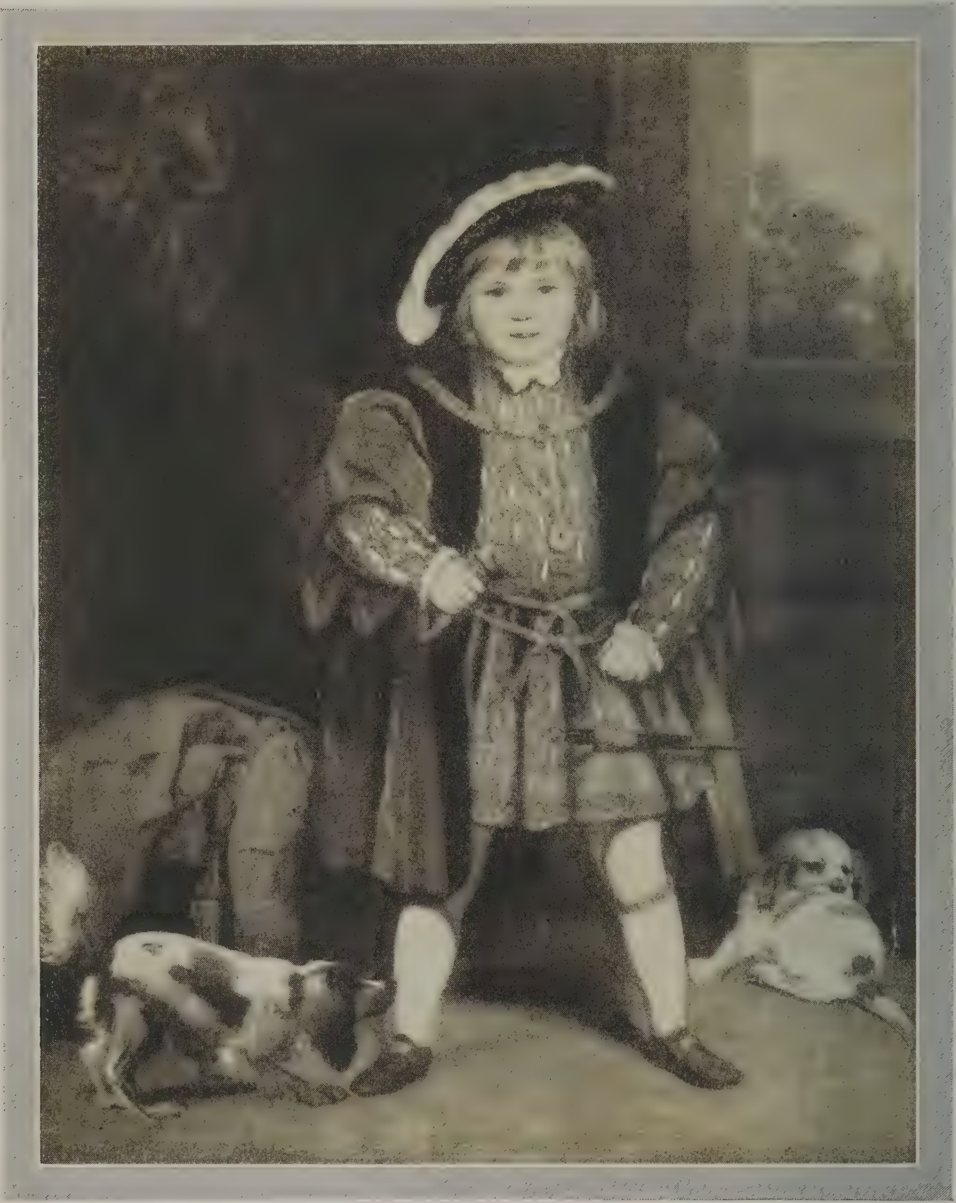
"MASTER SPENCER"

From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

There is no mistaking any of his pictures; the least experienced amateur of art can recognize a Reynolds at a glance. His invariable qualities are that mood of quiet elegance for which there is no better word than "gentleness," simplicity of composition, grace in drawing, and a richness of color that is both deep and delicate.

In forming his own style, Reynolds was greatly aided by the fact that his critical acumen was scarcely less remarkable than his creative impulse. He was a man of sound taste and rare sagacity—as wise as he was clever. The critical discourses which, later in life, he delivered *ex cathedra* as first president of the Royal Academy



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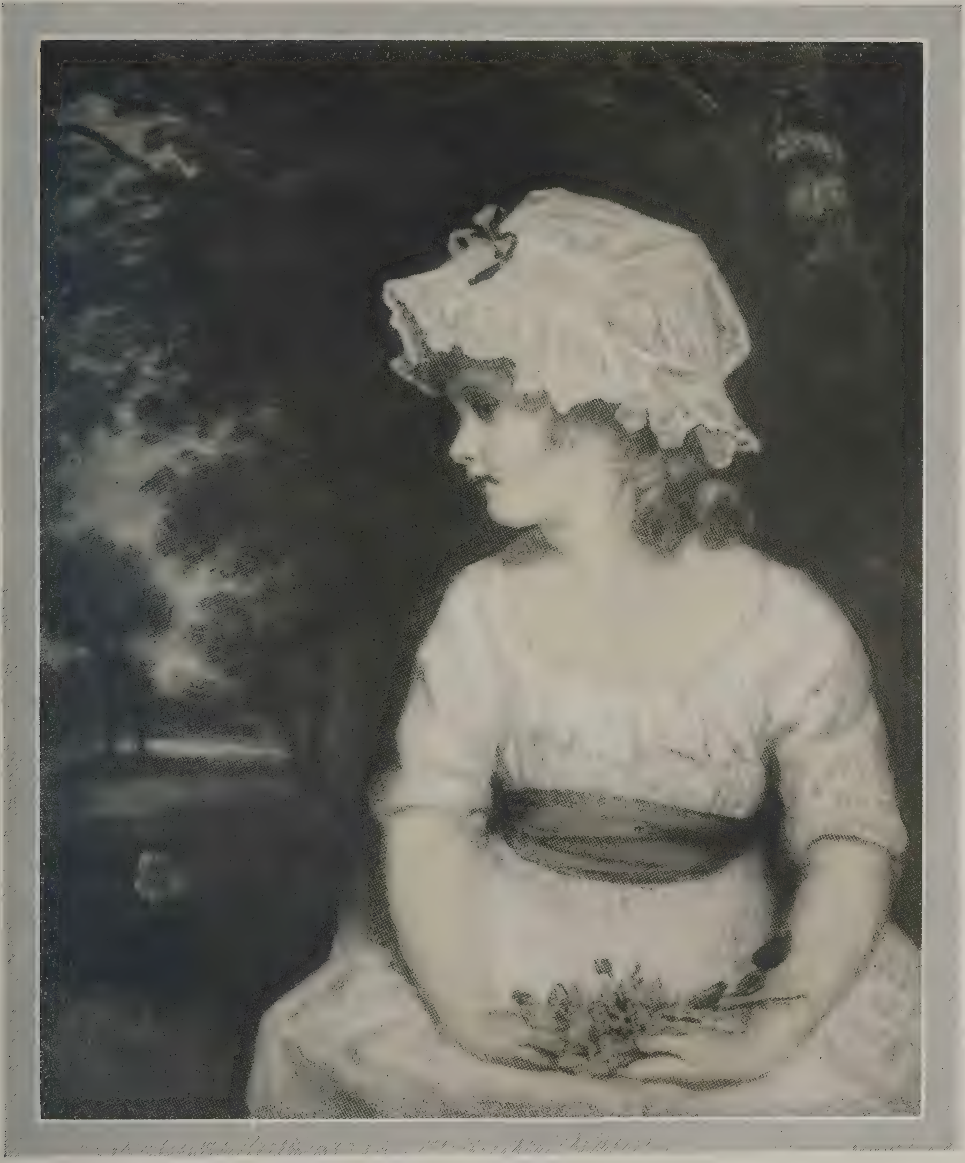
"MASTER CREWE"

From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds



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"PORTRAIT OF MISS GWATKIN"

Collection of Baronne Alice de Rothschild. From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

are more widely read to-day than in the years when they were issued, and are still regarded as authoritative expositions of the theory of art. It was by virtue of his broad and balanced mind that Reynolds made a greater impression on his century than his two nearest rivals among British painters. Gainsborough wielded a more pliant brush, and Romney excelled them both in poignancy of intimate emotional appeal; but Reynolds was not only a great painter, but a great man.

Early in his career he took possession of life as one who had been born to master it. When he established himself in London, at the age of thirty, he won an almost instant success with his sturdy portrait of Admiral Keppel—a picture in which he rewarded the benefactor of his student years with an immortality which that worthy

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"LADY CREWE"

From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

sailor would not have won in any other way.

Thereafter the history of Reynolds's life is the story of a continuous and ever-increasing prosperity. He acquired wealth and fame, he established himself in a hospitable house in Leicester Square, he sagely selected as his intimates the greatest men of England, he diplomatically held himself aloof from the innumerable intrigues and quarrels of the time, he was compelled by unanimous insistence to accept the first presidency of the Royal Academy, he was knighted, and he was held in honor and respect by the entire nation.

Undisturbed by this continuous besiegement of prosperity, he maintained a habit of unintermitted industry. His average production was three or four portraits per week, and his art steadily grew better with the years. He was still painting valiantly at the age of sixty-six, when suddenly, as he was working in his studio, the sight of one eye failed him. Quite quietly he laid his brushes down.

"All things come to an end," he said; "I have come to mine." The history of art records no simpler and no gentler valedictory than this.

The technical style of Reynolds was invariable, and his life-product cannot be divided into periods; but he appears to have looked at life in three different moods, according as his sitters were men or women or children. These moods may most quickly be defined by borrowing the terminology of literary criticism. Generally speaking, he seems to have rendered his men realistically, his women romantically, and his children idealistically. These are vague and awkward words, but they seem more convenient than any others to define the threefold aspect of this painter's work.

Reynolds himself stated that he always looked upon his sitters "with dilated eyes." That was only another way of saying that the aim of his art was to suppress all non-essentials and to concentrate attention on a few selected features. But the principles which guided this selection were different, according as his dilated eyes were turned on men, on women, or on children.

When Reynolds looked at men he considered them as individuals and set himself to catch and to record the essence of their characters. In this aspect of his art he shows himself unflinchingly a portrait-painter. The famous portrait of Lord Heathfield, the guardian of Gibraltar, is a notable example. In this vigorous picture there is little grace of line and little charm of coloring; but the canvas acquaints us fully with the personality, and summarizes the life-history, of a man who is sharply distinguished from any other we have ever seen.

Reynolds's insight into character must have been extraordinary. He seldom saw his sitters more than twice; but in those two sessions he contrived to pluck out the heart of their human mystery.

But Reynolds's attitude is noticeably different when he looks at women. They interest him not as individuals, but merely as types of grace and beauty. His mood is no longer realistic, but romantic; he practises art for the sake of art instead of for the sake of life.

Consider, for example, the noted picture of the Duchess of Devonshire playing with her infant child. The unruffled aspect of the hair and the dress of this exquisite noblewoman is irreconcilable with the sturdy activity of such a romping baby; and yet the canvas is a model of rhythmic design. In the famous picture of three ladies (popularly called "the three graces") decorating a terminal figure of Hymen the artist is obviously less concerned with the portrait-value of his three female figures than with the general grace and fluency of his composition.

Reynolds does not seem to have been interested personally by his women as he was interested humanly by his men. Instead of depicting them exactly, he flatters them in terms of what, in his own time, was regarded as the "classical" tradition. His greatest picture of a woman is the portrait of Nelly O'Brien, which hangs in the Wallace Collection in Hertford House; but there is nothing in this portrait to suggest that the fair, though fragile, Nelly was one of the notorious courtezans of her time. She is depicted as a type of exquisite romance, with no attempt at individual characterization.

And when he turns his attention to children Reynolds shifts his point of view to a position still further removed from actuality. He ceases to be, in any exact sense, a portrait-painter. He is not concerned with character. He depicts children not as individuals, but as concrete symbols of ideality.

SACRIFICING PORTRAITURE TO POETRY

In this regard his most illustrative canvas is the very popular composition entitled "Heads of Angels." The five winged and disembodied heads which are included in this composition are all studies from the same model; but they exhibit no attempt at individual characterization and are used merely to suggest a vision of imagined loveliness.

It is not difficult to understand the motive which led this great artist to sacrifice the mood of portraiture to the mood of poetry whenever he painted children. Portraiture is a record of character; and character is the result of experience. What a person is, at any moment, is merely the sum total of all that he has been. Among the famous painters of the world the greatest analyst of character is Rembrandt. Yet even Rembrandt becomes noticeably ill at ease when he is required to paint the portrait of a very young person—a person who, in the current phrase, has not lived. His greatest works are portraits of men and women beyond middle life, wherein he may record his impression of all that they have been: in his portraits of young girls we are conscious of an emptiness—a vague, defeated searching of the artist for a life-interest that was lacking in the sitter. The sagacious Reynolds clearly understood that he could not seek in children the human interest that he discovered in Lord Heathfield. Therefore he looked upon them in the lyric mood and depicted them as intimations of ideality.

Reynolds's paintings of children are, therefore, the least realistic and the most utterly artistic of his works. The most popular of all his pictures—and possibly the greatest—is " The Age of Innocence." The little girl who sat barefooted on the grass to pose for this painting has not been identified; but, in very truth, the omission of her name from history does not matter in the least, since she is depicted not as an individual, but as a type. This work is not a portrait, but a poem. It is formally artistic. The child is composed within an isosceles triangle—a geometrical arrangement which is accentuated by the crossing of the two tree-trunks in the background; and the absolute regularity of this triangulation has been deftly interrupted by the rippling of many exquisite details of drawing.

It is interesting to note that another of Reynolds's most popular paintings of children—the picture of little Miss Bowles embracing her amiable dog—is also composed within an isosceles triangle; and the student of art may derive many lessons from studying the contrast between these two pictures, which—though identical in arrangement—are so different in detail.

This same Miss Bowles served as the model for " The Strawberry Girl," which hangs very near the other picture in Hertford House. Here, for once, the artist seems to have striven for characterization in his portrayal of a child. This picture is more human, and less lovely, than the other. In " The Strawberry Girl " Miss Bowles is depicted as an individual; and in the more formal composition with her dog she is depicted as a type. In these two canvases we are offered an emphatic illustration of the difference between the realistic and the idealistic mood.

But—to return to our initial point—the portrait of Master Spencer may be regarded as a definitive example of that exquisite refinement which is both gentle and genteel. This is a creation which suggests the entire atmosphere of eighteenth-century England. We have grown to learn in later years that many things are more noble than nobility; and yet a reverence for a departed period may still lead us—not unreasonably—to lift our hats in deference to a time when to be exquisite was to be great.

FOREVER AND EVER AND AY

If she loves him she'll follow him, follow him;
  Follow him, follow him on,
Down the deep, rough track to the midnight black
  And up through the gates of dawn.
Like a faithful star she will follow him
  To the ends of the earth away;
Hither and yon she will follow him on,
  Forever and ever and ay.

If he loves her he'll follow her, follow her;
  Follow her, follow her still,
Through the fairest vales of the nightingales,
  And over the highest hill.
Like a faithful slave he will follow her
  Wherever her path may stray;
From dawn till dawn he will follow her on,
  Forever and ever and ay.

And when she has followed him, followed him,
  And when he has followed her,
They shall, somewhere, meet in a garden sweet
  With mint and musk and myrrh.
Then love shall follow them, follow them
  Out through the fields of May,
Where groom and bride in bliss shall bide
  Forever and ever and ay.

Nixon Waterman

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

AUTHOR OF "A PRINCE OF SINNERS," "THE MASTER MUMMER," "CONSPIRATORS," ETC.

BEING THE THIRD OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF MR. STANLEY BROOKE, THE DELIBERATE DETECTIVE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. SCOTT WILLIAMS

"CAN I speak to you for a moment, sir, if you please?"

The Hon. Stanley Brooke, who had just left the booking-office at Covent Garden Theater and was passing under the portico, turned around at the words, indifferently curious.

A man had touched him upon the arm and stood by his side now, patiently waiting for a reply. At first glance he seemed entirely of the usual type. His clothes were shabby, his expression furtive, his smooth civility of the servile order. He was small, almost undersized; pallid, with narrow lips and protruding chin. The more Brooke looked at him, the less he liked his appearance.

"Do I look the sort of person likely to give money to a man who is out of work, with a wife just recovering from an operation?" he asked patiently.

"It isn't your appearance made me speak to you," the man replied quickly. "It's the fact that you're the Hon. Stanley Brooke, sir."

"You have the advantage of me," Brooke remarked.

"My name wouldn't interest you," the man continued hurriedly. "I'm cadging, right enough, but not in the way you think. I've heard them talking about you—some one pointed you out in Herbert's bar. When I saw you coming out of the booking-office at the theater there I made up my mind to speak to you. You take an interest in queer things and places, don't you?"

"To a certain extent I do—and queer people," Brooke assented.

The man moved a trifle nearer. More than ever, as he stood there, with his overcoat buttoned up to his chin, looking half fearfully around, he seemed like some hunted animal.

"I could tell you something," he said, "if I had a chance. Will you come to my room to-night, any time after nine—No. 14 Hender Street, off Long Acre—straight up the stairs? There's my name chalked on the door—Robinson."

"What am I to come for?" Brooke asked.

"I'll put you onto something," the man replied, dropping his voice a little—"put you onto a job."

"I think," Brooke remarked thoughtfully, "that if any exchange of hospitalities is to take place between us, I would rather be host. You can come and see me, if you like, at my rooms—No. 10 Peter Street—between seven and eight this evening."

"It wouldn't be any good," the man replied. "What I want to tell you I can only tell you in my room. I dare not come up to the West End, either. I should be followed. You don't run any risk. It's simply a bit of money I want, and you shall have value for it, but I don't want to be seen with you."

Brooke scratched his chin thoughtfully for a moment. It was raining slightly, and he noticed that the man had crept beneath the shelter of his umbrella. His desire to

"IT ISN'T YOUR APPEARANCE MADE ME SPEAK TO YOU"

avoid observation was certainly not assumed.

"I know nothing of you," Brooke remarked, "and there are obvious objections to my visiting you in Long Acre. For anything I know, you may be a blackmailer or a thief, or any sort of bad character. Will you come to me if I stand a taxicab?"

"I won't," the man answered. "I tell you it's only from my room you can understand what I want to put before you. You've nothing to be afraid of. I live alone there with my sister. There's no one else on the premises. You could double me up, if I tried to rob you, with one hand. Say you'll come to-night. Don't put it off. It's worth while."

"I'll come," Brooke promised.

The man moved away. Brooke turned around and watched him shuffle across the road.

"Let myself in for something!" he sighed.

It happened to be an evening without any engagements for Brooke. He dined in his rooms without changing his clothes, wrote a line or two upon half a sheet of note-paper, with the address to which he was going and the reasons for his visit, and left it upon the table, as was his custom when he was bound upon any unsavory errand.

At nine o'clock he walked eastward, turned into Long Acre, and discovered Hender Street without any particular difficulty. No. 16 consisted of an automobile showroom on the ground floor, which was now closed.

An open door by the side led him to a flight of stairs, at the top of which, as he had been advised, he found the word "Robinson" written in white chalk upon an uninviting-looking panel from which most of the paint seemed to have been scraped off.

He had scarcely knocked before the door was opened from inside. The little man who had accosted him in the street was standing there. He almost dragged Brooke in, stood for a moment listening, then closed the door.

"Did you happen to notice whether any one saw you come in?" he asked quickly.

"So far as I could see, the street was empty," Brooke replied.

He stood looking around him with some curiosity. The room was barely furnished, lit by one common lamp, close to which, upon an uncovered deal table, was a worn and battered typewriter. Seated before it was a girl.

She turned her head at his approach and looked at him. She was very pale, but there were about her appearance contradictions which puzzled Brooke. She wore a crimson serge dress, which gave her a general impression of tawdriness. Her hands were well-shaped and white, however; her hair neatly arranged.

The hat which hung on a peg by her side — a most dejected-looking piece of millinery — was trimmed with flowers of faded brilliance. Still when she looked at him, curiously, yet with a certain indifference, he was surprised at the quality of her eyes.

"It's my sister," the man explained. "She gets a little typing sometimes, as you see. One of the offices sends her some work."

"And what do you do for a living?" Brooke inquired.

The man hesitated.

"Anything," he replied, a little defiantly. "I've been in prison three times. I expect I shall be in again before long. Sit down, sir, if you will."

Brooke looked at the one wooden chair and shook his head.

"Thanks," he said, "I'd rather stand. Please be as brief as possible."

"You've nothing to be afraid of," the man declared, with the first note of resentment in his tone.

"Possibly not," Brooke agreed, watching the girl. "You brought me here, though, and I want to know what for."

The little man cleared his throat.

"It's the house next door," he said. "It's locked up in front—bolts and bars across the window. The back entrance is locked, too. It's been empty for months. The Miller Automobile Company had it and failed."

"Well?" Brooke remarked. "I saw that it was empty—dust all over the windows. What about it?"

"Step this way a moment, sir."

Brooke obeyed the summons. The man was standing close to the wall by the side of the fireplace.

"This house and the next one were connected a few years ago," he said. "This wall has only been built up lately. It's nothing but lath and plaster. Look here."

He removed a picture, cut out from some illustrated paper, which had been pinned upon the wall. From the spot which it had covered he took out a brick, thrust his arm in, and pulled out two more. He laid them softly upon the floor. All the time he was almost holding his breath.

"Stoop down and look!"

Brooke obeyed him. There was one more brick apparently still remaining, but the mortar had slipped away, and from all around it came a little gleam of dull light.

"Get your head as near as you can," Robinson whispered. "Listen!"

Brooke obeyed. At first he heard nothing, however. There was some sort of light in the room, but no sound. He was on the point of withdrawing his head when the silence was suddenly broken. A man's voice was heard — a man's voice which seemed to come with queer, rolling regularity.

Brooke listened hard, but was unable to make out any word. Then there was silence, broken almost immediately by the sound of several voices speaking in unison. This time there seemed to be no doubt about it. The reply was a sort of monotonous chant. One man had spoken and others had replied. Brooke listened with more interest. The same thing happened several times. Then again there was silence. Brooke stepped away from the wall.

"What on earth is it all about?" he asked.

The man Robinson shook his head.

"I know nothing," he said, and his voice sounded weak and faint. "Only, if you go down-stairs, you will find that the entrance to the house is locked and barred, and the back entrance is locked, too. Neither I nor any one else sees people enter. And yet there is that!"

Brooke brushed the dust from his clothes.

"It is certainly curious," he admitted. "What do you think about it, young lady?"

She raised her eyes and looked at him.

"All that I think of it is," she said, "that it is safer in this world, and in this little corner of London, to mind one's own business. That is what I tell my brother."

"Can one live by minding one's own business?" Robinson exclaimed excitedly. "Don't laugh—I was a gentleman once. I'm anything you like now, down to a gutter thief, but I have something of the tastes left. I want money — God knows how I want it!"

"What is your proposition?" Brooke inquired.

"Not much of a one, anyway. There's a mystery there, and you're a lover of mysteries. I've disclosed it to you, as much as I know of or dare know. Help yourself and pay me. It ought to be worth a ten-pound note to you. You're rich, they say, and just go round looking for adventures. You can have all the adventure you like if you can get into that room. I know nothing about it, but I'll guarantee that. Give me a tenner."

"Do you propose to assist me in any further steps I might take toward the elucidation of this affair?" Brooke asked curiously.

The man began to shake as though he had an ague.

"Not for my life!" he declared. "I've seen too many queer things in this city. If you're curious, I'm not."

"What about your room here?"

"Your last visit," Robinson insisted feverishly. "I'm not going to be connected with anything that happens. Do you hear? I tell you I won't be! I just want a ten-pound note from you, and out you go and forget you've ever seen me. And if you want excitement—my God! you'll have value for your money!"

Brooke shook his head.

"You are a little mistaken as to my vocation and tastes," he explained. "I am not a curious person. If any one consults me, and I can help him, I do so. On the other hand, I should say that an affair like this, with which I am not connected in any way, is a matter either for the police or for the tenants of the flat."

"You mean you won't do anything?"

"Nothing at all, thank you," Brooke replied, taking up his hat. "If you will accept a sovereign as a loan or gift or whatever you like to call it, it is yours, with pleasure. So far as I am concerned, that is the end of the matter."

The man was obviously disappointed. He accepted the sovereign, however, with eagerness.

"My advice to you would be," Brooke concluded, as he prepared to depart, "to give information to the police as to anything that may be going on in the next house. They will probably reward you, if your information turns out to be worth anything."

Robinson said nothing, but his face seemed to grow tense.

"I may have to," he muttered. "I'm up against it. I want money. After all, one's life isn't worth much if one starves. Go down quietly, please."

Brooke turned toward the girl, but she was already bending over her work. He lingered upon the threshold. There was a queer sort of tired grace in the stiff, unbending lines of her figure.

"Good night, young lady," he said pleasantly.

"Good night!" she replied, without raising her head.

Brooke strolled back down Hender Street into Long Acre and returned to his rooms. Once or twice he paused as though to look into a shop-window, but he was not able on that night to verify absolutely his suspicions.

Yet from the moment he left the little house in Hender Street he had the impression that he was being followed. The same idea came to him once or twice during the next few days. He had always the uncomfortable sense that he was under surveillance.

He thought little more of his visit. There were possibly lawbreakers of some sort in the place—very likely by arrangement with the landlord. In any case, the affair did not greatly interest him. It was not until the third day, when he picked up the morning paper and read that a man named Robinson had been found dead on the Embankment, within a dozen paces of Scotland Yard, that he felt any real interest in the matter.

Late that afternoon Brooke found his way once more to the house in Hender Street. He passed along the passage, climbed the stairs, and knocked at the door. The girl's tired voice bade him enter. She did not rise from her seat. She simply glanced around as he entered. He noticed with a little thrill of horror that she was still wearing the crimson-colored gown.

"What do you want?" she demanded.

He closed the door behind him. She awaited an answer to her question with her fingers still resting upon the keys.

"Is this true that I have read in the papers about your brother?" he inquired gravely.

"It is true," she answered. "What of it?"

Brooke was a little staggered. Her utter lifelessness of tone and manner was incredible. It was as though she were without feelings or any sort of emotion.

"It is a very terrible thing," he said. "I am very sorry for you."

"Why are you sorry?" she asked. "And why is it a very terrible thing? Death may seem terrible enough to you people who lead happy lives. To us, who are being broken hour after hour upon the wheel, death is the night which is all we have to look forward to."

He sensed a chill in his blood. Somehow he felt that ordinary forms of speech were wholly out of place with this remarkable young woman. She had leaned a little back in her chair, however, as though willing to desist, for a moment, from her labors.

"Are you going to remain here?" he asked, a little diffidently.

She looked at him with cold scrutiny.

"Whether I live here or elsewhere, whether I choose to live at all or to die," she remarked, "is no concern of a stranger."

"I am sorry if I have offended you," he began.

"Will you kindly tell me why you have come?" she interrupted. "You will be able to go the sooner."

"I have come," he explained, "because I want to know what you think about your brother's death. The papers are divided in their opinion. Some say that he fell down and got concussion of the brain; others seem to think that he was murdered."

"If it interests you to know the truth," she said, "he was murdered on his way to give information at Scotland Yard about the next house."

Her matter-of-fact words, delivered in her quiet, tired tone, seemed to Brooke the most thrilling he had ever heard. He had never realized more completely the presence of tragedy. He moved a little nearer to her.

"Look here!" he exclaimed; "doesn't this thing move you? Doesn't it seem terrible to you? Can you sit there and tell me, without the slightest emotion, that your brother was murdered?"

SHE TURNED HER HEAD AND LOOKED AT HIM

"He knew very well what would happen," she replied. "He has known for weeks what would happen if he approached the police. That is why he chose rather to come to you; only, you see, you very wisely declined to meddle in an affair which has nothing to do with you."

"Then what, in God's name, is this affair?" he demanded. "Who are these people who murder rather than have information as to their doings given to the police? And how did your brother become connected with them?"

"Because," she replied, "my brother was employed by one of them until he was thrown out for unworthiness."

"For unworthiness?" Brooke muttered.

She nodded.

"There is honor, you know, among thieves and criminals and sinners of every description," she said. "My brother had sunk so low that, although he was willing to pilfer himself, to rob in any way, to rob with violence if he had the strength or the courage, he was yet equally willing to make money by giving away those whose sins were of a different order to his. He had sunk so low that a man can sink no lower."

"He is dead!" Brooke whispered, shivering. "Don't you think you should remember that?"

"I have no sentiment," she answered scornfully. "For this last year I have known him to be one of the lowest things that crawls. You are surprised, perhaps, that I am not in black, weeping over his memory. The earth is a cleaner place for his absence. That is all that I feel about his death."

"Nothing else?"

"Perhaps one little spark of admiration," she replied defiantly, "for the men who have the courage to remove such as he from their path."

Brooke had lost his imperturbability. He was horrified, and showed it. He tried one counterstroke, however.

"If," he asked, "your point of view is as you suggest, why do you sit here grinding out a miserable living from that battered old typewriter? Why don't you join the great crowd of those who fatten upon the fools of the earth?"

She turned and faced him. Something very grim, but which might almost have developed into a smile, trembled at the corners of her lips.

"Because," she told him, "I do not happen to have come into contact with any illegal means of earning my livelihood. The ordinary methods of my sex, unfortunately, do not appeal to me. I have no ideals, I do not value character a straw, but I have certain tastes and preferences, the gratification of which keeps me from —any word you choose to give it," she added, looking him full in the eyes.

"I speak, perhaps, rather of the past than of the present," she continued. "I am older now and a little tired. There were times when I was considered good-looking. May I ask whether you intend to keep me much longer answering your questions?"

"I will pay you for your time," Brooke declared bruskly.

"Thank you," she replied, "I accept payment for the work I do. This isn't work."

"So you are proud," he remarked. "You would like to be a criminal, but you won't take money, you tell me."

She shrugged her shoulders scornfully.

"You belong to those who don't understand," she said shortly. "Any one can see that you are half a fool."

"I am going to prove," Brooke retorted, "that I am a whole one. I am going to solve the mystery of the next house."

For a single second a shadow of something new appeared in her face.

"If I were you," she advised, "I wouldn't."

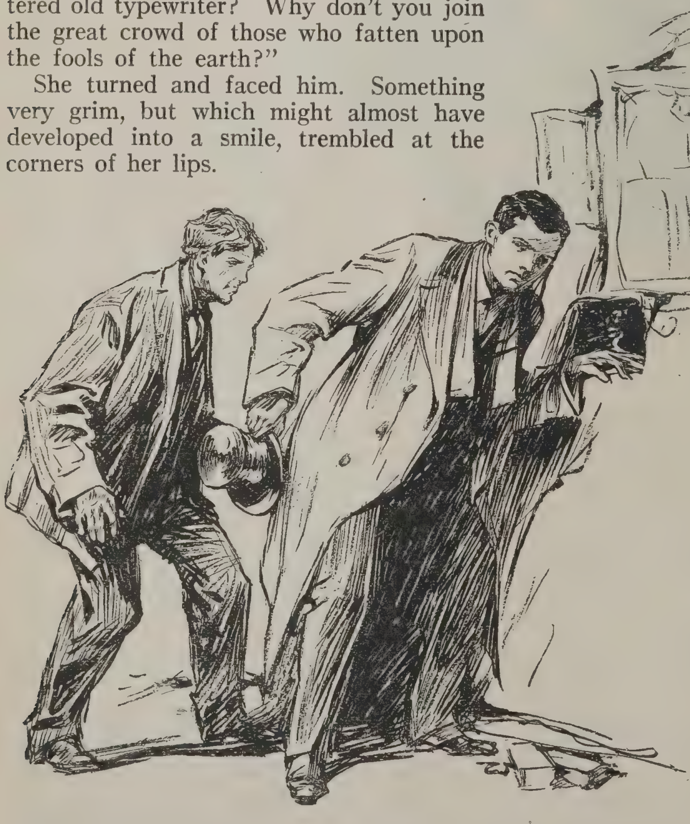
"You wouldn't care to help, then?"

"I should not!"

"Do you mind if I listen once more at the wall?"

"You can do as you like," she answered indifferently.

Brooke made his way



BROOKE LISTENED HARD, BUT WAS UNABLE TO MAKE OUT ANY WORD to the spot which Robinson had showed him, carefully removed the bricks, and listened. There was, without doubt, some one in the adjoining room. One voice only was audible — the voice of one man apparently speaking in a monotonous singsong, as though he were delivering some sort of an address.

Punctuated by those level sentences, every now and then came a fainter sound, to which Brooke listened with something like dismay. It was like the moan of an animal—or was it a child in pain? He replaced the bricks.

" I wonder," he said to the girl, " whether the police have ever searched that house?"

" Why not save your own skin and go and ask them to?" she suggested.

Brooke came and stood by the side of her typewriter.

" Listen," he continued; " I am going through with this little adventure myself. Isn't there anything you can tell me?"

" Why should I?" she asked defiantly. " If they are criminals who meet there, why should I be on your side more than theirs? I am a fragment of the débris of the world myself."

" You are not," he answered steadily. " You have courage. I believe that you have other gifts."

She set her teeth.

" In any case," she declared bruskly, " I have nothing to tell you. If you want my advice, you've had it, but I'll give it you again. Don't meddle in things that don't concern you."

" Will you do some typewriting for me?" Brooke asked.

" At ninepence a thousand words and threepence extra for carbon copies," she assented. " I'd rather do it for any one else. That doesn't matter."

" I will take the liberty, then," Brooke replied, moving toward the door, " of coming to see you later on."

Again, as he left the house, Brooke was conscious that he was being shadowed. He stopped once or twice and retraced his steps, but he was never able definitely to decide whence came the subtle, ever-present feeling.

Finally, with a shrug of the shoulders, he abandoned his half-formed intention of examining the premises from the outside and, turning into Long Acre, took a taxicab back to his rooms.

On the hall table was a letter addressed to him in a bold masculine handwriting and with a London postmark. He opened it at once. A single line written in thick, black ink, with several notes of exclamation, seemed to stare up at him from the half-sheet of paper:

> Keep away from Hender Street, Mr. Brooke!!!!

Brooke thrust the letter into his pocket. At last he had some definite proof that he was not wasting his time. In the morning he paid a visit to the house-agents and learned that the empty house in question had been leased to the manager of the defunct automobile company, who was now abroad. The agreement had one year to run, and the agents had had no notice of any subletting.

Brooke walked from their offices to Hender Street. Without any attempt at concealment, he examined the front of the house. It was not only locked and barricaded, but there was dust upon the fastenings. He made his way to the back entrance. The gate leading into the little strip of asphalt was fastened with a chain. There was no sign that it had been disturbed for a long time.

He made his way to the front again. Suddenly the door of the adjoining house was opened and a man was literally thrown into the street. Brooke caught a glimpse of a negro in the background—a stern and ferocious-looking figure. Then the door was closed.

A thin, weedy-looking young man picked himself up from the ground, took off his spectacles to be sure that they were not broken, and began to knock the dust off his clothes. He saw Brooke regarding him with astonishment, and smiled faintly.

" Just my luck to run up against this sort of thing!" he exclaimed. " All in the day's work, though."

" Did you annoy any one?" Brooke inquired.

" It seems so," the young man answered. " I am a reporter on the *Weekly Post,* and I went to interview Kinsey Brand."

" The African traveler?" Brooke asked quickly.

The young man nodded. They had fallen into step together and set their faces southward.

" Yes," he replied. " That was his servant who just hurried me out. He's got two of them. He need never be afraid of burglars with two beauties like that on the premises!"

"Better have a drink," Brooke suggested—"pull you together."

The young man assented readily. They entered a bar and sat on high stools.

"What did you want to interview Kinsey Brand about?" Brooke asked.

"Oh, they say he's brought home a new religion—discovered it among the natives, where they have been practising it for two thousand years," the young man continued. "All the magazines have tried to get him to write about it, but he won't, and every reporter in London has tried to get at him, unsuccessfully. They generally end where I did!"

"This," Brooke murmured, "is very interesting."

The young man felt his back.

"What I should like to do," he declared, "would be to get Jack Johnson to stroll in there with a note-book and ask him a few questions. As a matter of fact, I never saw Kinsey Brand at all. I was just giving the negro half a sovereign when I heard a voice that sounded like a bellow, and out I went."

"Queer place for the man to live," Brooke remarked.

"He's got a bit of money, too, I should think," the reporter continued. "Lots of skins and things about the place. Smelled like a corner of the zoological gardens."

"What is this religion—do you know?" Brooke asked.

"No idea," the young man answered. "Seems to make 'em tolerably muscular! The only reporter who got Brand to say a word was Ted Foales, of the *Express*. He told him that all he wanted to do was to be left alone; that he wanted neither converts nor critics."

"It's not a money-making job, then," Brooke remarked thoughtfully.

"About the only religion that ain't," the young man murmured, looking into the bottom of his empty glass. "I don't know that I blame 'em, either. If I'd got a brand-new religion to foist on the world, I'd run it for all it was worth. One would be able to stand a gentleman a drink then, in return for any little civility one might receive."

Brooke took the hint and the young man's glass was replenished.

"Between you and me," the latter said, moving his stool a little closer to Brooke's, "if I had the time and the money and the physique and the courage I should like to stick to this Kinsey Brand. There are some queer stories going about.

"They say he went mad on the voyage home from West Africa, and that he brought home a negro and a native priest. If so, he's got 'em in that house. While I was there I heard a man making noises in a tongue which made you feel as though you were in a monkey forest. The only visitors he ever has are three or four old cronies, all West Africans, and they almost live in the place."

"It all sounds very mysterious."

"I was too scared to look about me much," the young man continued; "but just inside that passage what do you think there was, hanging down from the ceiling? A long, double-edged knife, hung by a piece of gold thread! The knife was stained all over, and I'll swear it was blood. Nice, cheerful sight to greet you when you step in!"

"I should imagine," Brooke remarked, "that Mr. Kinsey Brand's instincts are not hospitable."

The young man grunted.

"Anyway, I've done with him," he declared. "Any one else can take up the job!"

At ten o'clock that night Brooke sat in his rooms with an open letter and a pile of newspapers by his side. The former he had just received from the librarian of a large book-shop from whom he made occasional purchases. It was not very long, but its contents were interesting:

DEAR SIR:

I am sending you the file of papers, procured with great difficulty, and I beg that you will take every care of them. It is a very remarkable circumstance that the letters from Mr. Kinsey Brand, for which the *Times* was paying a large sum, ceased abruptly on the eve of his projected visit to one of the most interesting spots in Africa. Since then, notwithstanding the large offers which have been made to him, Mr. Kinsey Brand has not, so far as we know, set his hand to paper at all, either in the form of articles or volume. It is understood that his health was affected by privations, and that he had no further inclination to write of his travels. The affair, however, is in some respects mysterious, and I may say that many efforts have been made, even up to the last few weeks, to obtain some explanation.

Faithfully yours,

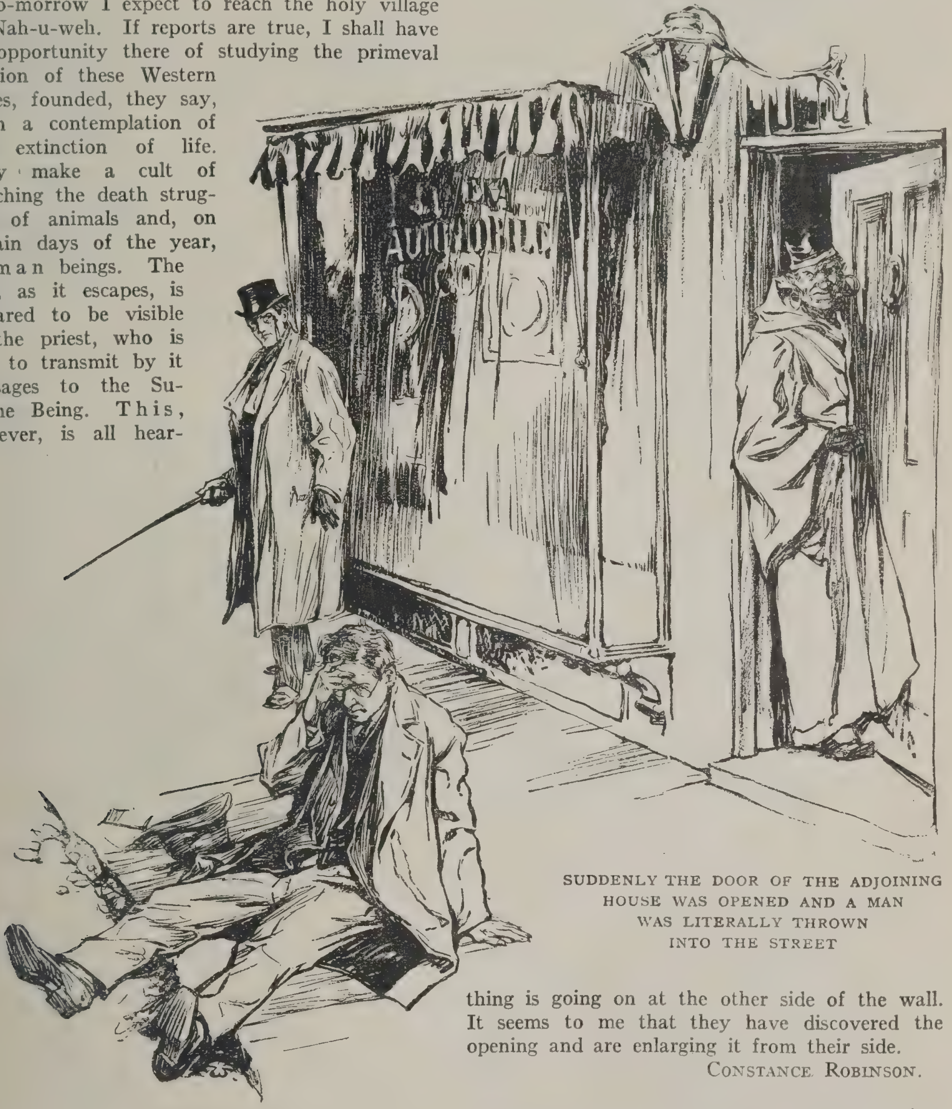
S. CLOWES.

The interest of the newspapers culminated in the issue of latest date. For the second or third time Brooke was reading some extracts of a letter written about two years ago and signed “Kinsey Brand”:

> To-morrow I expect to reach the holy village of Nah-u-weh. If reports are true, I shall have an opportunity there of studying the primeval religion of these Western tribes, founded, they say, upon a contemplation of the extinction of life. They make a cult of watching the death struggles of animals and, on certain days of the year, human beings. The soul, as it escapes, is declared to be visible to the priest, who is able to transmit by it messages to the Supreme Being. This, however, is all hearsay. I shall know more about it in my next letter.

There was a knock at the door. Brooke's servant entered, bearing a note. Brooke took it and glanced at it, carelessly at first and then with a sudden interest. It was addressed to him in typewritten characters, and in the corner it was marked “Urgent.” He tore it open and read the following:

> Mr. Brooke:
>
> If you are still interested in the house next door, you had better come here at once. Something is going on at the other side of the wall. It seems to me that they have discovered the opening and are enlarging it from their side.
>
> Constance Robinson.



SUDDENLY THE DOOR OF THE ADJOINING HOUSE WAS OPENED AND A MAN WAS LITERALLY THROWN INTO THE STREET

Brooke sprang to his feet, made a few hasty preparations, took a taxicab to the corner of Hender Street, passed up the passage and the stairs, and knocked at the door above. There was no reply.

He turned the handle and entered.

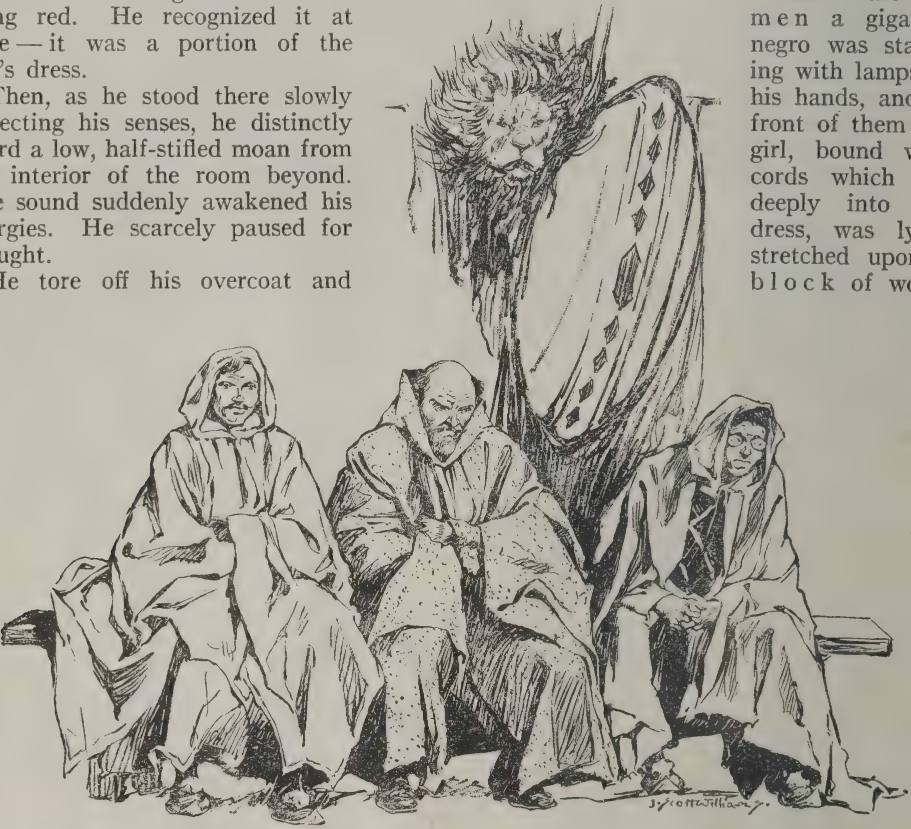
The room was empty.

On the floor was the typewriter, lying on its side, broken. By the side of the wall were half a dozen loose bricks and a quantity of plaster. There was a hole in the wall, stuffed up with paper, large enough for a man to pass through.

Brooke stood for a moment, rooted to the spot. Caught on a corner of the fender was a torn fragment of something red. He recognized it at once — it was a portion of the girl's dress.

Then, as he stood there slowly collecting his senses, he distinctly heard a low, half-stifled moan from the interior of the room beyond. The sound suddenly awakened his energies. He scarcely paused for thought.

He tore off his overcoat and coat, threw himself on all fours, and made one plunge at the mass of paper which alone blocked the opening. He was through in a moment and on his feet in the room on the other side of the wall before any one could seize him.


J. Scott Williams.

THREE HAD THE AIR AND ATTITUDE OF SPECTATORS

For a few seconds there was a grim and ghastly silence. Brooke looked around him wildly. The apartment was unfurnished, save that the floor was covered with thick rugs, and three benches were placed near the farther wall. There were six men present altogether, three of whom were sitting with folded arms upon the farthest bench. They had the air and attitude of spectators.

Directly facing them was a man as black as ink, dressed in a yellow robe, and holding a long knife of thin blue steel in his hand; not far off stood a gaunt, strange-looking person, with parchment-white skin and burning eyes, whom Brooke recognized in an instant, from his pictures, as Kinsey Brand, the explorer.

Behind the two men a gigantic negro was standing with lamps in his hands, and in front of them the girl, bound with cords which cut deeply into her dress, was lying stretched upon a block of wood. Her face was absolutely colorless, her eyes black and staring.

There was a curious, sickly odor which seemed to come from the lamps which the negro was swinging. All these things were before Brooke like a flash. For some reason or other, probably owing to the fact that the ceremony at which they were assisting had reached what to them was its most impressive stage, no one stirred from his place during those few seconds. Brooke had time to withdraw his hand from his hip pocket. He stood there with his feet firmly planted upon the ground and his back to the wall. In his hand the revolver glittered like silver in the light of the red flame. Then, without removing his eyes from the priest, he shouted as though to unseen followers.

"Come on, you men! I've got them! They are all here! See that the house is surrounded!"

The priest, for such he seemed to be, suddenly raised the knife which he was holding and crouched as though for a spring at the intruder. Brooke, who had never shot at a human being in his life, felt scarcely a tremor as he pulled the trigger of his revolver and saw the man go swaying over with a hideous cry and his hands above his head.

His downfall, the flash and report of the revolver, seemed to spread confusion among the remaining occupants of the room. The three spectators, followed by the negro, rushed for the door. Brand remained for a single moment glaring at Brooke.

DIRECTLY FACING THEM A MAN BLACK AS INK, NOT FAR OFF A GAUNT, STRANGE LOOKING PERSON, AND BEHIND THEM A GIGANTIC NEGRO

Then he muttered something, something which sounded to Brooke at first like gibberish, and afterward like music, something which ended in a little impressive cry—a denunciation, perhaps, for one hand was lifted to the ceiling. Then he, too, turned and left, walking with a strange dignity.

Brooke, for the first few seconds, was dazed. Then he seized the knife and commenced to cut the cords which bound the girl. Once he paused. The atmosphere had become unbearable.

The sound below was unmistakable—the crackling and roaring of flames. He glanced at the window. A long tongue of red fire had shot up. He hacked furiously at the rope. The girl was almost fainting.

"Get through the hole," he begged, "if you can. Can you crawl?"

She nodded. He dragged her toward the opening. As he pushed her through he glanced back. A great zigzag crack had spread itself out across the opposite wall and a hissing puff of smoke rushed in. Outside he could hear the calls in the streets and the throb of the fire-engine. The girl seemed suddenly inert. She was only halfway through.

"Make an effort!" he shouted.

She disappeared. He flung himself into the opening. He, too, reached the other side. The girl was half on her feet, swaying.

"Don't faint," he implored. "Cling to me. We must make a rush for the stairs."

"Who said anything about fainting?" she replied. "Come on!"

They rushed for the stairs, his arm around her. Below they could hear the crashing of hatchets as the firemen forced their way into the next house. A volume of smoke met them, but they reached the street in safety. The crowds of people closing in on either side cheered as they emerged from the house and made way. Some one helped her into a taxi. They drove off. She was only half conscious.

"My typewriter!" she murmured.

"We'll get a new one from the insurance company," Brooke whispered comfortingly. "Keep your courage up for a minute or two."

Her lips moved, but she had no strength to speak. Brooke drove to a nursing-home, where the matron was a friend of his, and where they willingly took her in.

At eleven o'clock the next morning Brooke called at the nursing-home. The girl was lying on the sofa in her room. She looked at him steadily as he came and sat by her side.

"Well?" she asked.

"The two Africans were burned," he told her quietly. "They had planned to destroy the place by fire if anything happened, but the flames spread too quickly and their own escape was cut off."

"What about the man Brand?"

"He was found dead in his room."

"And the three spectators?"

"They must have got away," he replied. "There were no other casualties. Tell me what happened."

"I was sitting at work," she said, "when I heard them boring at the wall. I wrote a note and went down into the street to find a boy to take it to you. When I got back the African was in the room. He seized me, put something over my mouth and dragged me through to the other side of the wall.

"They tied me to that block and chanted all sorts of strange things I couldn't understand. Just as you appeared the priest had lifted that knife as though he were going to stab me, and I heard Kinsey Brand cry out in English: 'Watch for her soul!'"

Brooke shuddered.

"They were all as mad as men could be," he declared.

"Will it be in the papers?"

He shook his head.

"No one would believe it! I think we'd better keep it to ourselves. Both houses were burned to the ground—completely destroyed."

She breathed a sigh of relief.

"What about my typewriter?" she asked weakly.

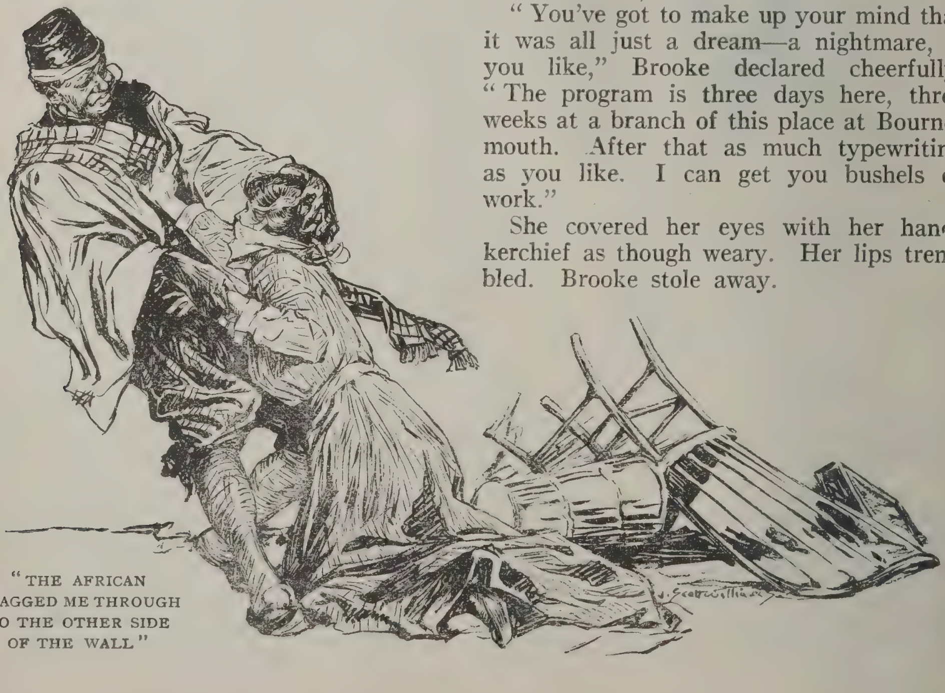
"Burned to ashes, and about time, too," he replied briskly. "The 'g' was crooked and the 'w' had a twist in the middle. You shall have a brand-new one and plenty of work as soon as you are able to start."

She fidgeted for a moment and frowned. Then she sighed. There was something a little pathetic in the abnegation of her ill manners.

"You are very kind," she said, her voice shaking a little—"you have been very kind indeed. You saved my life, too. I wanted to die, but not—like that!"

"You've got to make up your mind that it was all just a dream—a nightmare, if you like," Brooke declared cheerfully. "The program is three days here, three weeks at a branch of this place at Bournemouth. After that as much typewriting as you like. I can get you bushels of work."

She covered her eyes with her handkerchief as though weary. Her lips trembled. Brooke stole away.



"THE AFRICAN DRAGGED ME THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL"

WHERE THE THEATER FALLS SHORT

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STAGE IN THE MATTER OF VISUALIZING CERTAIN TYPES OF THE PLAYWRIGHT'S FANCY

BY BRANDER MATTHEWS

Professor of Dramatic Literature in Columbia University

FEW competent critics would dispute the assertion that the drama, if not actually the noblest of the arts, is, at all events, the most comprehensive, since it can invoke the aid of all the others without impairing its own individuality or surrendering its right to be considered the senior partner in any alliance it may make. Poetry, oratory, and music, painting, sculpture, and architecture, these the drama can take into its service with no danger to its own control.

Yet even if the drama may have the widest range of any of the arts, none the less are its boundaries clearly defined. What it can do, it does with a sharpness of effect and with a cogency of appeal no other art can rival. But there are many things it cannot do; and there are not a few things that it can attempt only at its peril.

Some of these impossibilities and inexpediencies are psychologic subtleties of character and emotion too delicate and too minute for the magnifying lens of the theater itself; and some of them are physical, too large in themselves to be compressed into the rigid area of the stage. In advance of actual experiment it is not always possible for even the most experienced of theatrical experts to decide the question with certainty.

Moreover, there is always the audience to be reckoned with, and even old stagers like Henry Irving and Victorien Sardou cannot foresee the way in which the many-headed monster will take what is set before it. When Percy Fitzgerald and W. G. Wills were preparing a prose version of "The Flying Dutchman" for Henry Irving the actor made a suggestion which the authors immediately adopted.

The romantic legend has for its hero a sea-captain condemned to eternal life until he can find a maiden willing to share his lot; and when at last he meets the heroine she has another lover, who is naturally jealous of the new aspirant to her hand. The young rival challenges *Vanderdecken* to a duel, and what Irving proposed was that the survivor of the fight should agree to throw the body of his rival into the sea and that the waves should cast up the condemned *Vanderdecken* on the shore, since the ill-fated sailor could not avoid his doom by death at the hand of man.

This was an appropriate development of the tale; it was really imaginative; and it would have been strangely moving if it had been introduced into a ballad on the old theme. But in a play performed before us in a theater its effect was not altogether what its proposer had hoped for, although he presented it with all his marvelous command of theatrical artifice.

The stage setting Irving bestowed upon this episode was perfectly in keeping with its tone. The spectators saw the sandy beach of a little cove shut in by cliffs, with the placid ocean bathed in the sunset glow. The two men crossed swords on the strand; *Vanderdecken* let himself be killed, and the victorious lover carried his rival's body up the rocks and hurled it into the ocean. Then he departed, and for a moment all was silence.

A shuddering sigh soon swept over the face of the waters and a ripple lapped the sand. Then a little wave broke on the beach, and withdrew, rasping over the stones. At last a huge roller crashed forward and the sea gave up its dead. *Vanderdecken* lay high and dry on the shore; and in a moment he staggered to his feet, none the worse for his wounds.

But unfortunately the several devices for accomplishing this result, admirable as they were, drew attention, each of them to itself. The audience could not help wondering how the trick of the waves was worked, and when the Flying Dutchman was washed up by the water it was not the mighty deep, rejecting *Vanderdecken,* again cursed with life, that the spectators perceived, but rather the dignified Henry Irving himself, unworthily tumbled about on the dust of his own stage. In the effort to make visible this imaginative embellishment of the strange story its magic potency vanished. The poetry of the striking improvement on the old tale had been betrayed by its translation into the material realities of the theater, since the concrete presentation necessarily contradicted the abstract beauty of the idea.

IN MECHANISM LURKS MENACE

Here we find ourselves face to face with one of the most obvious limitations of the stage—that its power of suggestion is often greater than its faculty of actual presentation and that there are many things, poetic and imaginative, which it can accomplish after a fashion, but which it ventures upon only at imminent peril of failure. Many things which are startlingly effective in the telling are ineffective in the actual seeing. The mere mechanism needed to represent them will often be contradictory and sometimes even destructive.

Perhaps it may be advisable to cite another example, not quite so cogent as Irving's *Vanderdecken,* and yet carrying the same moral. This other example will be found in a piece by Sardou, a man who knew all the possibilities of the theater as intimately as Irving himself and who was wont to utilize them with incomparable skill. Indeed, so frequently did the French playwright avail himself of stage devices, and so often was he willing to rely upon them, that not a few present-day critics have been inclined to dismiss him as merely a supremely adroit theatrical trickster.

In his sincerest play, "Patrie," the piece which he dedicated to Motley and which he seems himself to have been proudest of, Sardou invented a most picturesque episode.

The Spaniards are in possession of Brussels, the citizens are ready to rise, and William of Orange is coming to their assistance. The chiefs of the revolt leave the city secretly and meet William at night in the frozen moat of an outlying fort. A Spanish patrol interrupts their consultation and forces them to conceal themselves. A little later a second patrol is heard approaching, just when the return of the first patrol is impending. For a second it looks as though the patriots would be caught between the two Spanish companies.

But William of Orange rises to the occasion. He calls on his sea-wolves, and when the second patrol appears marching in single file there suddenly spring out of the darkness upon every Spanish soldier two fur-clad creatures who throttle him, bind him, and throw him into a hole in the ice of the moat. Then they swiftly fill in this gaping cavity with blocks of snow and trample the path level above it. And a moment after the sea-wolves have done their deadly work and withdrawn into hiding, the first patrol returns and passes all unsuspecting over the bodies of their comrades — a very practical example of dramatic irony.

As it happened, I read "Patrie" some years before I had an opportunity to see it on the stage, and this picturesque scene had lingered in my memory so that in the theater I eagerly awaited its coming. When it arrived at last I was sadly disappointed.

The sea-wolves belied their appetizing name; they irresistibly suggested a group of trained acrobats, and I found myself carelessly noting the artifices by the aid of which the imitation snowballs were made to fill the trap-door of the stage which represented the yawning hole in the ice of the frozen moat. The thing told was picturesque, but the thing seen was curiously unmoving, and I have noted without surprise that in the latest revival of "Patrie" the attempt to make this episode effective was finally abandoned, the sea-wolves being cut out of the play.

In "Patrie," as in "Vanderdecken," the real reason for the failure of these mechanical devices is that the plays were themselves on a level superior to those stage tricks; the themes were poetic, and any theatrical effect which drew attention to itself interrupted the current of emotional sympathy. It disclosed itself instantly as incongruous, as out of keeping with the elevation of the legend — in a word, as inartistic.

A similar effect, perhaps even more frankly mechanical, would not be inartistic in a play of a lower type; and it might possibly be helpful in a frankly spectacular piece, even if this happened also to be poetic in intent. In a fairy play, a *féerie,* as the French term it, we expect to behold all sorts of startling ingenuities of stage mechanism, whether the theme is delightfully imaginative, as in Maeterlinck's beautiful "Blue Bird," or crassly prosaic, as in "The Black Crook" and "The White Fawn."

WHEN APPEAL TO THE EYE IS SAFE

In picturesque melodrama also, in the dramatization of "Ben-Hur," for example, we should be disappointed if we were bereft of the wreck of the Roman galley and were deprived of the great chariot-race. These episodes can be presented in the theater only by the aid of mechanisms far more elaborate than those needed for the scenes in "Vanderdecken" and "Patrie"; but in "Ben-Hur" these mechanisms are not incongruous and distracting as were the simpler devices of "Vanderdecken" and "Patrie," because the dramatization of the romanticist historical novel is less lofty in its ambition, less imaginative, less ethereally poetic. In "Vanderdecken" and in "Patrie" the tricks seemed to obtrude themselves, whereas in "Ben-Hur" they were almost obligatory.

In certain melodramas with more modern stories—in the amusing piece called "The Round Up," for example—the scenery is the main attraction. The scene-painter is the real star of the show. And there is no difficulty in understanding the wail of the performer of the principal part in a piece of this sort when he complained that he was engaged to support forty tons of scenery.

"It's only when the stage-carpenters have to rest and get their breath that I have a chance to come down to the footlights and bark for a minute or two."

A moment's consideration shows that this plaintive protest is unreasonable, however natural it may be. In melodramas like "The Round Up" and "Ben-Hur," as in fairy plays like the "Blue Bird," the acting is properly subordinated to the spectacular splendor of the whole performance. When we enter a theater to behold a play of either of these types we expect the acting to be adequate, no doubt, but we do not demand the highest type of histrionic excellence. What we do anticipate, however, is a spectacle pleasing to the eye and stimulating to the nerves.

In plays of these two classes the appeal is sensuous rather than intellectual, and it is only when the appeal of the play is to the mind rather than to the senses that merely mechanical effects are likely to be disconcerting.

Mr. William Archer has pointed out that in "Little Eyolf" Ibsen has for once failed to perceive the strict limitation of the stage when he introduces a flagstaff with the flag at first at half-mast and a little later run up to the peak. Now there are no natural breezes in the theater to flutter the folds of the flag, and the audience knows this. This, then, is the dilemma—either the flag hangs limp and lifeless against the pole, which is a flat spectacle, or else its folds are made to flutter by some concealed pneumatic blast or electric fan, which instantly arouses the inquiring curiosity of the audience.

Here we find added evidence in support of Herbert Spencer's invaluable principle of economy of attention, which he himself applied only to rhetoric, but which is capable of extension to all the other arts, and to no one of them more usefully than to the drama. At any given moment a spectator in the theater has only so much attention to bestow upon the play being presented before his eyes, and if any portion of this attention is unduly distracted by some detail, like either the limpness or the fluttering of a flag, then he has just so much less to give to the play itself.

Very rarely indeed can we catch Ibsen at fault in a technical detail of stage management; he was extraordinarily meticulous in his artful adjustment of the action of his social dramas to the picture-frame stage of our modern cosmopolitan theater. He was marvelously skilful in endowing each of his acts with a background harmonious for his characters, and he was careful to refrain from the employment of

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any scenic device which might attract attention to itself. He eschewed altogether the more violent spectacular effects, although he did call upon the stage-manager to supply an avalanche in the final act of "When We Dead Awaken," but even this bold convulsion of nature was less incongruous than might be expected, since it was not exhibited until the action of the play itself was complete; in fact, the avalanche might be termed only a pictorial epilogue.

AS TO "CLEOPATRA" AND "MACBETH"

The principle of sternly economizing the attention of the audience can be violated by distractions far less extraneous and far less extravagant than avalanches. When a forgotten tragedy of "Cleopatra" was produced in the eighteenth century at the Théâtre-Français, the misguided poet prevailed upon Vaucanson to make an artificial asp, which the Egyptian queen coiled about her arm at the end of the play, thereby releasing a spring, whereupon the beast raised its head angrily and emitted a shrill hiss before sinking its fangs into *Cleopatra's* flesh.

At the first performance a spectator, bored by the tediousness of the tragedy, rose to his feet when he heard the hiss of the tiny serpent. "I agree with the asp!" he cried, as he made his way to the door.

But even if Vaucanson's skilful automaton had not given occasion for this disastrous gibe, any attention which the audience might pay to the mechanical means of *Cleopatra's* suicide was necessarily subtracted from that available for the sad fate of *Cleopatra* herself. If at that moment the spectators noted at all the hissing snake, then they were not really in a fit mood to feel the tragic death-struggle of "the serpent of old Nile."

A kindred blunder was manifest in a recent sumptuously spectacular revival of "Macbeth," when the three witches flew here and there through the dim twilight across the blasted heath, finally vanishing into empty air. These mysterious movements and disappearances were achieved by attaching the performers of the weird sisters to invisible wires, whereby they could be swung aloft; the trick had been exploited earlier in the so-called Flying Ballet, wherein it was a graceful and amusing adjunct of the terpsichorean revels. But in "Macbeth" it emptied Shakespeare's scene of its dramatic significance, since the spectator waited for and watched the startling flights of the witches and admired the dexterity with which their flittings were controlled, and as a result he failed to feel the psychologic importance of the interview between *Macbeth* and the withered crones whose untoward greetings were to start the villain-hero on his downward career of crime.

In this same revival of "Macbeth" an equally misplaced ingenuity was lavished on the apparition of *Banquo's* ghost at the banquet. The gruesome specter was made mysteriously visible through the temporarily transparent walls of the palace, until at last he emerged to take his seat on *Macbeth's* chair. The effect was excellent in itself, and the spectators followed all the movements of the ghost with pleased attention, more or less forgetting *Macbeth* and failing to note the maddening effect of the apparition upon the seared countenance of the assassin-king. In this revival of "Macbeth" no opportunity was neglected to adorn the course of the play with every possible scenic and mechanic accompaniment, and the total result of these accumulated artificialities of presentation was to rob one of Shakespeare's most poetic tragedies of nearly all its poetry, and to reduce this imaginative masterpiece to the prosaic level of a spectacular melodrama.

Another of Shakespeare's tragedies has become almost impossible in our modern playhouses because the stage-manager does not dare to do without the spectacular effects that the story seems to demand. Shakespeare composed "King Lear" for the bare platform stage of the Globe Theater, devoid of all scenery and supplied with only the most primitive appliances for suggesting rain and thunder; and he had three successive storm scenes, each intenser in interest than the one that went before, until the culmination comes in perhaps the sublimest and most pitiful episode in all tragedy.

At the original production three centuries ago the three storms may have increased in violence as they followed one another; but, at best, the fierceness of the contending elements could be only suggested, and the rain and the thunder were not allowed to divert attention away from the agonized plight of the mad monarch. But nowadays the three storm scenes are rolled into one and the stage-manager sets out to provide a realistic tempest in rivalry with nature. The mimic artillery of heaven and the simulated deluge from the skies which the producer now provides may excite our artistic admiration for his skill, but they distract our attention from the coming together of the four characters so strangely met in the midst of the storm. The more realistically the tempest is reproduced the worse it is for the tragedy itself; and in most recent revivals the full effect of the painful story has been smothered by the sound and fury of the man-made storm.

The counterweighted wires which permit the figures of the Flying Ballet to soar over the stage and to float aloft in the air disturb the current of our sympathy when they are employed to lend lightness to intangible creatures like the weird sisters of Shakespeare's tragedy; but they have been more artistically utilized in two of Shakespeare's comedies to suggest the ethereality of *Puck* and of *Ariel*. The action of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" takes place in fairy-land and that of "The Tempest" passes in an enchanted island; and even if we wonder for a moment how the levitation of these airy spirits is accomplished, this temporary distraction of our attention is negligible in playful comedies like these, with all their scenes laid in a land of make-believe.

And yet it may be doubted whether even the "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Tempest," fairy plays as they are, do not on the whole lose more than they gain from elaborate scenic and mechanic adjuncts. They are of poetry all compact; and the more simply they are presented, the less obtrusive the scenery, and the less protruded the needful effects, the more the effort of the producer is centered upon preserving the ethereal atmosphere wherein the characters live, move, and have their being, the more harmonious the performance is with the pure fancy which inspired these two delightful pieces—then the more truly successful is the achievement of the stage-manager.

On the other hand, of course, the scenic accompaniment of a poetic play, whether tragic or romantic or comic, must never be so scant or so barren as to disappoint the spectators. The stage accessories must be adequate and yet subordinate; they ought to resemble the clothes of a truly well-dressed woman, in that they never call attention to themselves, although they can withstand and even reward careful inspection.

This delicate ideal of artistic stage setting, esthetically satisfying and yet never flamboyant, was completely attained in the production of "Sister Beatrice" at the New Theater in New York, due to the skill and taste of Mr. Hamilton Bell. The several manifestations of the supernatural might easily have been overemphasized; but a fine restraint resulted in a unity of tone and of atmosphere, so subtly achieved that the average spectator carried away the memory of more than one lovely picture without having let his thoughts wander off to consider by what means he had been made to feel the presence of a miracle.

THE BELASCO DISCERNMENT

The special merit of this production of "Sister Beatrice" lay in the delicate art by which more was suggested than could well be shown. In the theater more often than not the half is greater than the whole, and what is unseen is frequently more powerful than what is made visible. In Mr. Belasco's "Darling of the Gods," a singularly beautiful spectacle, touched at times with a pathetic poetry, the defeated Samurai are at last reduced to commit hara-kiri. But we were not made spectators of these several self-murders; we were permitted to behold only the dim canebrake into which these brave men had withdrawn and to overhear each of them call out his farewell to his friends before he dealt himself the deadly thrust.

If we had been made witnesses of this accumulated self-slaughter we might have been revolted by the brutality of it. Transmitted to us out of a vague distance by a few scattered cries, it moved us like the inevitable close of a truly tragic tale.

In the "Aiglon" of M. Rostand, Napoleon's feeble son finds himself alone with an old soldier of his father on the battlefield of Wagram, and in the darkness of the night the hysterical lad almost persuades himself that he is actually present at the famous fight, that he can hear the shrieks of the wounded and the groans of the dying, and that he can see the hands and arms of the dead stretched up from the ground. This is all in the sickly boy's fancy, of course, and yet in Paris the author had voices heard and caused hands and arms to be extended upward from the edge of the back drop, thus vulgarizing his own imaginative episode by the presentation of a concrete reality.

Not quite so inartistic as this, and yet frankly freakish, was the arrangement of the closet scene between *Hamlet* and his mother when Mme. Sarah Bernhardt made her misguided effort to impersonate the Prince of Denmark. On the walls of the room where *Hamlet* talks daggers to the *Queen* there were full-length, life-sized portraits of her two successive husbands, and when *Hamlet* bade her look on this picture and on that, the portrait of *Hamlet's* father became transparent and in its frame we perceived the ghost. This is an admirable example of misplaced cleverness, of the search for novelty for its own sake, of the sacrifice of the totality of impression to a mere trick.

" Hamlet " is the most poetic of plays, and the " Aiglon " does its best to be poetic; and therefore the less overt spectacle there may be in the performance of these pieces the easier it will be for the spectator to focus his attention on the poetry itself. Even more pretentiously poetic than the " Aiglon " is " Chantecler," upon which the ambitious author has also lavished a great variety of stage-effects—as though he was not quite willing to rely for success upon his lyrical exuberance. In M. Rostand's " Aiglon " and " Chantecler," as in Mme. Sarah Bernhardt's " Hamlet," there is to be observed a frequent confusion of the merely theatric with the purely dramatic—a confusion to be found forty years ago in Fechter's " Hamlet." That picturesque French actor made over the English tragedy into a French romantic melodrama; he kept the naked plot and he cut out all the poetry. He lowered Shakespeare's play to the level of the other melodramas in which he had won success—for instance, " No Thoroughfare," due to the collaboration of Dickens and Wilkie Collins, or the earlier " Fils de la Nuit," acted in Paris long before Fechter appeared on the English-speaking stage.

This *Son of the Night* was a pirate bold, personated, of course, by Fechter, and in one act his long, low, rakish craft, with its black flag flying, skims across the stage, cutting the waves and dropping anchor close to the footlights. The surface of the sea was represented by a huge cloth, and the incessant motion of the waves was due to the concealed activities of a dozen boys. The play had so long a run that the sea-cloth became worn dangerously thin. At last at one performance a rent spread suddenly and disclosed a disgusted boy just as the pirate ship, with the *Son of the Night* on its deck, was coming about.

Fechter was equal to the emergency. " Man overboard!" he cried, and, leaning over the bow of the boat, he grabbed the boy by the shirt and pulled him on deck.

Probably very few of the spectators noticed the mishap, and if they had all observed it, what matter? A laugh or two, more or less, during the performance of a prosaic melodrama, is of little or no consequence. A disconcerting accident like this in a play like " The Son of the Night " does not cut into any vital current of sympathy, for this is a quality to which the piece could make no claim. But in a truly poetic play a mishap of this sort would be a misfortune in that it might precipitate the interest and interrupt the harmony of attention needed by the poetic dramatist.

SLUMBER SONG

When Sleep withholds from weary brain
And tired eyes her kind repose,
My spirit seeks a loved demain
Where tranquil scenes disclose.

I linger in a mountain dell,
Where sings a languid summer stream;
Afar I hear the faint herd-bell
Chime in my waking dream.

I hear the droning of the bees,
The drowsy hum of insect joy;
And in the shade my Fancy sees,
Asleep, the shepherd boy!

Lincoln Adams

A MATTER OF HALF A MILLION

BY TOM MASSON

I ARRIVED at the anniversary party given by the Van Antrums on the four thirty. These people had been trying to break into society for a long time, and, of course, I was indispensable.

As I got off the train I noticed a particularly smart-looking woman — just out of girlhood, I should say at a fleeting glance. Colonel Caspers was with her, and I knew, therefore, that she was of our party. I thought I had seen her face before, but couldn't quite place her. She was wonderfully handsome, and while I was fleetingly observing her, who should come up to me but my old valet, Jakers. And now I remembered that he had gone to the Van Antrums on my recommendation.

He touched his cap with a genuine look of real joy.

" Glad to see you, sir."

" And you, Jakers," I replied. Then I looked at the handsome woman once more.

" Come up to my room later, Jakers," I whispered, giving him my luggage checks.

He was considerate enough to get me away from the crowd in a small motor that held only the driver and myself. Once in my room, I proceeded to make a careful toilet, when there was Jakers's old knock at the door.

" You will have your bath, sir, at the usual time?" he said, as if he were totally unaware that I had summoned him on important business.

" No, Jakers; at nine thirty to-morrow," I replied. " Who is the handsome looker in Nile-green—the colonel was with her?"

" Mrs. Hilberton, sir."

" What! *The* Mrs. Hilberton?"

" Yes, sir."

And so this was the lady who had interested two continents—married to an aged millionaire who, dying, had left her with a nice slice of his fortune.

" It was half a million, wasn't it, Jakers?" I said softly.

" A trifle more, sir."

" Oh, well, we won't split hairs." A few hundred thousand more or less—what did it matter? Then my mind went suddenly back to my own slender pittance.

I squared around at Jakers. He was an old and trusted servant. We had never had a quarrel.

" Jakers," I said, " what do you consider are my chances?"

Jakers paused thoughtfully, as he put in the last sleeve-link.

" I should say good, sir," he replied, " fairly good."

His tone chilled me; it implied a lack of confidence in my ability. And Jakers knew me!

What experience, indeed, had been more complete than mine — not a phase or a shade of woman's character that I had not studied — and in all the capitals of the world. And here was Jakers, who had been with me for five years, expressing his doubts!

" What do you mean?" I said bluntly.

" Well, sir," said Jakers, " it's this way —she's going in for love, sir—for genuine love—the real thing—and she ain't likely to be fooled, sir—she's had experience."

" How do you know all this?"

" Well, sir, I overhears a good deal; and then I'm used to apprehending things."

" How many have come down here to—to—you know, Jakers?"

Jakers counted them up on his hand.

" Well, sir, there's the colonel, and Mr. Bagsby and Mr. Hopton and Sir Manville Strüthers—and yourself—"

" What do you mean by including me?" I said savagely.

" Beg pardon, sir; you mentioned it yourself, sir."

" Umph! And you think my chances are only fairly good because she is going in for real love, and I'm not the sort of person she would be attracted by—too cynical, I suppose—maybe too avaricious and grasping."

"A matter of half a million, sir, does make an awful difference; but nobody can fool her, sir; she's got the same feeling about it my Moll had—it's anythink to marry the right heart. When they gets that way there's nothing doing."

It was evidently a sad case. But my ambition was stirred—especially at the attitude of Jakers. It certainly would not do to permit myself to come a cropper before him. I made up my mind to win Mrs. Hilberton.

"Well, Jakers," I said, with a quiet smile of confidence, "let us wait and see. Do not let us form our conclusions too hastily. We have both had experience, Jakers."

"Yes, sir," said Jakers, giving me a few final touches.

I flattered myself that experience upon three continents is a fairly good asset, and in the course of three days I had outdistanced, with ease, the colonel, Sir Manville Struthers, Hopton, and Bagsby, and two young college men who had arrived upon the scene. These gentlemen had betaken themselves to tennis.

Mrs. Hilberton and I walked down the shadiest of lanes, checkered with the most brilliant patches of sunshine that Cupid has ever used as a trysting-place. It was in the early afternoon. The balmy breezes stirred the leaves overhead, the air was surcharged with vibrations, and suddenly I found the beautiful Mrs. Hilberton in my arms and all the world was changed. Such an hour, at the end of which—

"My darling," I said, "we must go back and join the others. I cannot wait to tell the world of the happiness that has come to me so strangely and yet so surely that it seems now as though we had known each other all our lives."

I found myself unconsciously falling into old ways of speech. I remembered I had used that same sentence eight years before upon almost the same occasion, and the worst of it was that now I really meant it.

Mrs. Hilberton snuggled closer to me.

"Darling," she whispered. There was something in her voice that made me start.

"Go on, dearest," I said. "Remember we are all in all to each other. Tell me everything."

She looked up at me with her violet eyes.

"Possibly," she whispered, "you thought I was wealthy."

Visions of that half-million, as it softly sank below hope's horizon, grew dim.

"How can you speak of such things?" I muttered.

"Nevertheless," she replied, "I feel that you must know. Recently—not so long ago—I was wealthy; to-day I am penniless. I lost it all speculating in that horrid old Wall Street. Isn't it a shame?"

I went back to Jakers. To describe the commonplace things we said is useless.

It was time to dress for dinner, and Jakers discreetly waited.

"Will you have the braided waistcoat, sir?" he inquired.

"Yes, Jakers, all the regalia. We must be gay. The inevitable has happened."

Jakers elevated one eyebrow and adjusted the points of the waistcoat.

"Pardon me, sir, that cutter has failed of half an inch. You were saying, sir—"

"The inevitable, Jakers. Mrs. Hilberton and I are one. Or, about one."

Jakers stood off and regarded me with the eye of an artist. Then he clasped his hands in mute interrogation. Words trembled on his lips, and yet he remained silent. It was evident that Jakers was almost overcome. At last he spoke.

"You have won her, sir?"

"Yes, Jakers."

"Ah, sir!" he exclaimed. "Heaven be praised! And to think, sir, that, after all, there is real love in the world between you two, sir. I knew how she was, but—"

"But you suspected me, did you, Jakers?" I said, with a smile. "You thought it was all for money with me, did you?"

"Well, sir, I must confess, I've seen a lot of it, and—"

I interrupted him sternly.

"Jakers!" I said. "When did you know that Mrs. Hilberton had lost her money in the Street?"

"The day she came, sir."

I regarded him reproachfully.

"And why did you not tell me?"

Jakers hesitated a moment. Then he said quietly:

"Well, sir, it was this way. It's a case of love, now, praise God, sir. But, sir, if you had known it beforehand you wouldn't have allowed yourself to fall in love with her. Am I right, sir?"

"That will do, Jakers," I said quietly. "You may go now."

THE SENSES AND MODERN LIFE

HAS MODERN INVENTION DULLED GOD-GIVEN FACULTIES THROUGH DISUSE?

BY GILBERT PARKER

I HAVE a question to ask, and it is this: Have our senses increased in acuteness, in precision, in delicacy, and in scope with the undoubted intellectual and mental advances which we have made in the last generation or so?

During that period steam and electricity have developed to an extent as almost to paralyze, and certainly to dumfound, the observer of human progress who realizes the magnitude of the powers which have been harnessed for the race of men to drive through the highways of civilization and beyond. During the past seventy-five years the social organism has undergone a complete revolution, owing to the discoveries of science and their application to industry through invention. In that time, too, humanity has become extensively and increasingly mobile.

Transportation, the cable, the telegraph, the marconigram have made the movement of millions of people over the earth's surface almost absurdly easy. The thought, the letter, the message, the memorandum, the official report which took months to go half the way round the world a generation ago passes from point to antipodal point between the soup and the dessert to-day. Trains rush at seventy miles an hour through the land; you can travel from London to Brighton under a mile a minute; you flit in your limousine to the North Sea and back in a day; you motor to Oxford to lunch, Cambridge to dinner, and then can sup at the Savoy while yet the night is young.

The most amazing, well-organized complexities of convenience, domestic, municipal, and national, surround the dweller in the cities and already possess the country towns. Society does three times as much as it did twenty-five years ago. A man can keep at least twice the number of engagements that he did at the beginning of this century; and it all looks very wonderful, flattering to human intelligence, and splendid when viewed from the standpoint of human convenience. It may be added, also, there is much that is splendid from the standpoint of the comfort and the health of mankind, since sanitation and hygiene have not only made such wonderful advances scientifically, but have become a part of our municipal and educational policy.

During the last few years, however, some of us have been wondering whether, with life made so mechanically easy as it is, our senses are not losing vitality and usefulness. To see, to hear, to feel, to smell, to taste—perhaps very many, if not most, people would say that all these senses have of late been cultivated more than in the past. But let us consider whether all the signs are favorable. Should they be unfavorable, the loss will not be individual, it will be national; it will affect the welfare of the race and its future rate of progress.

My own testimony may have no value; but the evidence of some more expert novelist or student of human nature ought to have some value, since observation with consequent reflection is the very essence of the literary art. The art of the novelist and dramatist has many characteristics akin to those of the medical profession. Even the profession of politics includes some of the characteristics of literature, startling as the statement may be.

Literature, however, has an immensely wider scope. A really successful politician (some are very stupid and certainly not successful) must deal with human nature, must observe it, and, sad to say! plays upon it for party or political advantages; and observation is one of his most skilful weapons. The literary man, however—novelist, or whatever may be his particular *metier* in this field of work—far more acutely than the politician, must observe the outer and superficial characteristics of human nature, the hundred obvious manifestations.

He must note not only symptoms which may indicate a passing functional derangement of the moral or mental constitution, he must go infinitely deeper if he wants to know character. He must find out, it may be, the more or less obscure thing — the disease or corruption lying behind the many obvious symptoms, which may be purely sympathetic or accidental; and it is probable that he will find his key not in the superficial manifestations and disturbances, but in some small, elusive thing which is a danger-signal to the trained mind to which is given also the trained eye.

It is said that the old convict drags a leg however slightly. Well, the habit of the mind, the temperament, or the disease, no matter how secluded, always leaves some recognizable sign to the expert eye. To illustrate and emphasize this argument the medical profession is here selected, because observation and, indeed, the expert use of the senses are at the very root of its success.

THE DOCTOR'S IMPORTANT ASSET

A member of the medical profession has the same experience as the novelist. The surgeon has a more or less exact science so far as actual operation is concerned. The expert medicine man, if the term may be used, has a specific for a recognizable trouble, whether functional or organic, but that part of the business, particularly in the case of the medicine man, is not the most important.

His heaviest task is diagnosis. Like the novelist, he may discover under a series of symptoms, accidental, passing, sympathetic, the obscure, the one significant elemental organic symptom (particularly in the pathology of the nervous system) which tells the story of the disease, near in its effect, but remote and secluded in its origin and working.

Thus it is (if I am right) that the faculties of observation, seeing, feeling, hearing, become so powerfully indispensable to all who have to deal with body, mind, or character. One has taken a man's or a woman's hand without looking at the face, indeed, has been uninterested in the face; and yet a casual hand-clasp has told a story — a life-story — physical, mental, which a sense of seeing would not have produced on the mind. The medicine man, if he may without impertinence be called this, depends not upon "book-larnin'," as the Irish say, which only organizes a natural knowledge, the knowledge got by experience, but upon the eye which observes the little things as well as the great, which is trained to register what it sees, as does the negative of the photographer.

CRISES IN SURGICAL WORK

To the oculist, the surgeon, must belong not only the sensitive eye, but the sensitive, skilled, decisive, educated hand. There is no other profession which demands a fuller, if as full, an exercise of all the senses, unless it be the scientist in his laboratory or the artist in his studio.

I asked a great German surgeon whether he ever felt nervous during an operation, whether the personal element ever supervened. He replied that having diagnosed the case, as he believed, correctly, he approached the operation with coolness; but it had happened to him that after using the knife and finding the disease which he had correctly diagnosed he suddenly came upon something vital and, perhaps, terrible, which he had not diagnosed. Then every faculty had to be employed—observation, sensitive appreciation, dependent as much upon the senses as upon the brain; precision, decision, and resource were demanded.

The composed exercise of all this is what makes the great surgeon. Recall the battle of Omdurman, and it will be remembered that it was the skilled observation of a primitive man of the people, a general now dead, who, in a moment of crisis, dealt with a wholly unexpected complication like a great military surgeon and saved the day. Such incidents could be cited by the hundred.

If, perhaps, there is agreement so far, we may go a little further still. Medical men are compelled to observe, and their habit of observation, which involves mental analysis and decisive action, shall I say for experiment?—for, after all, some element of experiment still exists in a field where diagnosis must always be imperfect—would naturally give the wide-seeing eye, or ought naturally to do so; but is it sure that in the active world to-day observation, both by seeing, hearing, and feeling, has increased?

THE PART PLAYED BY MOTORING

There are many who would quickly dispute the doubt here put forward. They would take an obvious thing as evidence—motoring, for instance; and they would cite the chauffeur's marvelous quickness of eye by which he observes danger, and so often, with skilled precision, by a hair's breadth escapes it! But the ordinary chauffeur's work may be regarded as a kind of specialization, exceedingly narrow, and confined to a certain area of limited incident; and even in doing what he does successfully a chauffeur is greatly assisted by certain rigid rules of the road, which take the place of observation and the action springing from it.

All too often it would appear that the chauffeur is like a horse in blinkers, only seeing down one narrow lane, and that many of the accidents now occurring are due to limited and uneducated observation. There are chauffeurs who can see well enough straight ahead of them and act with a fair amount of precision, but if they wish to see at all to right or left they have to turn their heads sharply and at a considerable angle to right or left. Now any one knows that the trained, the educated eye can see almost at right angles to right and left while not turning or scarcely turning the head at all, and indeed all people of capable observation see in that way, else the faculty of seeing would be hopelessly detached and fragmentary in its operation. The horizon would never be the horizon, but segments of the horizon.

It certainly does seem that there is an increasing unsensitiveness, if the word may be used, in the street and on the road. On the highway you blow your horn to a carter half a dozen times before the sound penetrates the cloudy atmosphere surrounding his senses. It must not be assumed that the man is refusing to take notice. He starts as though he had been shot when the sound does at last reach him. With people in the modern street, among motors and omnibuses, there is a curious development of that unsensitiveness joined to an increasing nervousness.

This subject was first suggested to my mind many years ago when as a very young man I had a certain temporary responsibility in connection with a deaf-and-dumb institute. There only four out of the six senses were at work, and the difficulty of imparting abstract ideas to those born deaf was a constant torture to the sympathetic mind. If the doctrine of the Trinity is for so many, with all their senses intact, a slow, if not an always incomplete process, what must it be to those who have to learn language through the eye and are unassisted by the faculty which so far as thought is concerned aids understanding most, if concentration of mind exists at the same time?

One has seen a deaf-and-dumb teacher walk slowly through a room observing its contents, and on coming out detail accurately three-fourths of the articles it contained, from a thermometer on the wall to an inkstand on the table. The sense of feeling, as with the blind, is notable in the more intelligent mutes. Sound to them exists, but through vibration. The sense of feeling is abnormally developed, and they are first taught to speak, without hearing, by vibration.

A LESSON FROM THE MUTE

The first sound the child learns is that of the letter O. With a hand on the teacher's chest the child discovers the vibration which accompanies a certain motion of the lips, and then with a hand on its own breast the child is made to reproduce the sound. The result is that in proportion to his advantages the mute is more highly trained in his limited senses than the hearing and speaking person. If we, however, paid a tithe of the attention which he pays to the cultivation of the senses, we should be far more capable than we are.

As every one knows, the dweller in the wild has all his faculties most acutely developed. Every sense is alive, is intensely, critically busy. Normally the sense of smell of the native is as delicate as his eye is piercing and comprehensive. He must note the myriad manifestations of nature, of animal life and mankind, in order that he may live his life effectively.

A Boer farmer on the veldt has drawn my attention to some specks on the horizon far away which looked to me no bigger than rabbits. It was impossible for me to tell what they were, though my sight is long and keen. To him, seeing them plainly, they were horses, and they *were* horses.

GENIUS IS OBSERVATION

He smelled the wattle-bush or the water in the spruit long before I had any cognizance of them. He saw something stirring in the long grass when I saw nothing. He felt the storm coming hours before the first signs appeared in the air or sky. He and his kind of the veldt, the prairie, the salt-bush plains and the pampas are the high priests of the senses.

Critics may say, " Ah, then you want us to be like animals—to go back to primitive habits while living in highly civilized conditions!" That is not so; but the same facility of the senses is quite as necessary in a different way in the most highly formed civilization, in the crowded life of the great city, in the jungle of modern existence, as it is in the veldt, on the salt-bush plains, on the prairie or the pampas.

Great geniuses have only been great medicine men, great watchers of life. Scientists, inventors, painters, sculptors, musicians, have only been marvelous observers with marvelous souls, and perhaps it is not extravagant boldness to make this statement: If it be true that there is decline of observation—not in its small specialized form, but in its comprehensiveness—by and by geniuses will be fewer in every profession. A genius is born of all men's bones; he is the product of his race and of his day; he comes from the soil of the intelligence and body of his time; and if observation declines in the race—observation which comes of all the senses—there will be a painful economy of genius.

This is an age of astonishing fertility of production, particularly in the region of knowledge, or of information rather. The very heavens rain books, the morning and the evening shed newspapers like autumn leaves; magazines each more radiantly colored than the other hit you in the eye at the book-stalls; and the odds-and-ends journal, the halfpenny teaser, the cherry of a hundred bites, spot the sands of the seashore when England goes to play at Margate and Blackpool and such heavenly places, like manna in the desert.

Information—information, it sits on the shelves of the artisan in forty volumes issued by those altruists and philanthropists, the publishers, who insist on training the human mind at whatever cost—to others. If ever there was a time when mental digestion was bad it is now. There is not only too much to eat, but we eat too much. Also, like the gluttonous cuisine of a great ocean liner, it all tastes so much alike, because we eat without thinking and think without eating wisely.

"I'm sick of information," said a schoolboy to me. " I'd like to think a bit—but I haven't time. It's stuff me with things I learn to-day and forget to-morrow, and I'd like to ' drownd ' myself sometimes."

He could not spell, his grammar was faulty because he had not time to learn it, and he could not think, for no one had shown him how. He himself knew in his crude way the things that mattered, but he was being crammed like a turkey for a Christmas holiday. As a young child he had been as observant as a savage, as watchful, subtle and resourceful as the ape from which he came, which perhaps in a sense he was when he was born; for the most remarkable thing about him was the strength of his fingers, by which as an infant he could hang, carrying his own weight, as all his undeveloped relatives do as they cling to the trees.

WHAT YOUTH ONCE DID

Every sense had been alive in him at first, and when he was strong enough, and had the chance to do so, he took to the woods when he could and played the games of the primeval beings—fighting, hunting, killing—killing savagely. Perhaps it is that man does not make his final emergence, does not complete the last stage in Darwinian evolution until after he is born.

When we are inclined to boast about the wonderful things we do nowadays, it must be remembered that the population of the world has increased prodigiously, that barbarous nations are steadily becoming civilized, and that progress is represented by the activities of millions where aforetime there were only thousands. There is certainly more education and knowledge on the lower levels of humanity than there ever was, but there is no evidence to show that, to-day, among those higher up, we produce the greater individual or the greater mind.

It is worth remembering that Alexander the Great was the supreme leader of the Hellenic armies at twenty; that the great Prince of Condé commanded the French army at twenty-two; that Pitt was Chancellor of the Exchequer at twenty-three; that Alexander Hamilton was a general and a statesman before he was twenty-five; that Wolfe commanded a regiment at twenty-two, and that Admiral Farragut, as he afterward became, with twelve sailors, subdued a town when he was thirteen years of age. One could cite numbers of such examples—examples of men who, at the age of which we now think as boyhood, did the huge work, not of winning a battle only, but of organizing an army, organizing political thought, organizing government, and conceiving and dictating laws which have had operation over long generations. After all, Napoleon had scarcely reached manhood when he commanded the army of Italy and swept through Paris all-conquering. There was that in the older, less complicated life which encouraged and developed concentration of all the senses and of the mind.

THE BOY SCOUT TO THE RESCUE

Observation through all the senses certainly does not appear to be as acute as it was. The very advantages provided for us by scientific genius, the multifarious things which are done for us in our well-paved, well-lighted, well-trained, well-cleaned, well-polished, well-harnessed, civilization, the safety with which we move—all combine to set our senses at rest, to induce in them inertia. It seems clear that the very nervous excitement of the age is due not alone to the tremendous stirring noises, the clamor of great cities, but to the fact that the senses have been given too little responsibility—or rather less responsibility than in days gone by. That less responsibility means inertia, and it becomes lassitude, out of which quivers the febrile excitement which makes for bodily feebleness or nervous collapse.

If this is so, then something should be done; and, since so much has been said, some helpful suggestion should be made. The writer would like more time and more ability than he possesses to think out a proposal for the means of restoration of the senses to something like their primary power. This is only the tentative inquiry of a layman, it is only a questioning—certainly with a bias and with a doubt in the mind; but this doubt and bias are not unaccompanied by a desire to assist in finding the way out.

Now, the boy-scout movement has been a wonderful step in the right direction. Seeing, hearing, feeling, not in a highway, but in the open country—in that way all the senses are cultivated. It would be good to add to the boy scout's training blindfold. It would be wise to add half an hour in every school each day to blindfold observation. Boys and girls should be let loose in a field, in the streets, in the schoolroom, under guidance, of course, to feel, to hear their way, to note and memorize what they have heard and felt.

THE BLINDFOLD EXPEDIENT

For very many years it has been my custom, in what might be called safe places in the open and in my own house, to find my way with my eyes shut. I began by first looking very steadily at the space in the open in which I was, or the room in which I happened to be, when I wished to experiment, getting in my mind's eye clearly the distance and a sense of measurement of movement to the door or whatever point I first wished to reach. The great essential was at first to have an immediate object toward which to move, however near or far, and it is astonishing how, after a little time, you feel where things are by the mind and not by touch only. Often, in passing through a crowded room like my study, I have put out my hand at the exact and right moment to touch something which ought to be where my hand was. After a time the measurement of distance became such that I seldom made a mistake. One comes to remember through the mind's eye and to picture with the mind the room or the space, and the things within the space, and then to measure one's footsteps and progress accordingly.

It is astonishing how living a house becomes to one with the eyes shut. In the open spaces, where the areas are larger, there is greater difficulty, and one must have landmarks if one is to go any distance, so that by touch of the hand or stick one can have one's guide-post, as it were. To my mind the great advantage of the blindfold experiment is to make the sense of touch more delicate and exact; to make the sense of hearing infinitely more acute, and through both these senses to acquire a kind of sixth sense, a consciousness of the presence of people and of things. An object which you do not see or touch protrudes itself upon the sense of feeling by the intentness of the nerves, and the hearing very quickly increases the capacity to detect innumerable sounds which practically have no existence for you when the eyes are open.

THE CASE OF THE GAMBLER

I have gone from the bottom to the top of my house with eyes closed, having diverged from the main staircase into rooms and bedrooms on different floors not only without accident, but only very occasionally touching anything for guidance. I am by no means expert as the blind are expert, but I do think that the practise has sharpened all my senses and has made all of them combined much more effective.

It is, of course, a commonplace, that when one faculty is taken away the others become more acute. The fact is that the full play of all the faculties with such wonders of modern invention and convenience around us make things too easy for each of the faculties. One-sided skill or the skill of one of the senses is not enough, however vigorously and effectively developed. We all have seen a musician with fingers which had the fascinating, swift stealthiness of some sleek animal of the jungle, feeling their way with graceful delicacy into far regions of sound; most of us have seen a man—Sir Henry Irving, for instance—telling the great story with his highly educated hand before the words left his mouth or his face showed its emotion; but what is needed is the all-round capacity with, as it would seem, the eye, the supreme, delicate instrument, cultivated most persistently of all.

In 1886, on my way to the South Seas, I met a gambler whom we will call Fargo. His career was an extraordinary one, his skill was a puzzle to many people who suspected, but never could prove, that he packed cards or resorted to the usual means of cheating. More than once he was arrested on the ground of conspiracy to defraud, and in each case was acquitted, though on two occasions his *confrères* were convicted.

A series of incidents into which I need not enter threw me into his company on more than one journey. I believed that he cheated, but knowing very little of cards, naturally I could not tell how he did it. Once in Australia he asked me if I would care to see him take revenge on three men who, he said, had conspired to despoil him. They were men of considerable position in the community. I discovered later that what he said was true—they had determined to "do him"; and he had led them on to a point where, playing for high stakes, they conceived that they could achieve a *coup*.

I watched them play through the greater part of the night. In the gray light of early dawn I saw the three audacious gentlemen leave the room, blanched, dumfounded, and beaten. I never knew, I do not know to this day, in what way Fargo overcame them. I do not think it was all the luck of the game. I noticed that during the play, after dealing, he held the cards which had not been dealt at a certain angle from him and flipped them carelessly before putting them down; but always he did it nonchalantly and looking in the faces of the men beside him or in front of him. Subsequently I spoke of this to him.

Smiling enigmatically he got up, took a pack of cards, and holding them in front of him, but at a little distance from his body, and at an angle which seemed not in the least unusual, and looking me in the face, he said: "What card do you want from the pack?" I named a card. Flipping the pack with his thumb and looking me straight in the eye he took out a card and showed it to me. It was the card for which I had asked. This he did a dozen times without a single mistake, while looking me in the eye.

ALL-ROUND SENSE TRAINING

In explanation he said: "I can do a good many things with cards which other people can't do, because I use my eyes intelligently, because I train them to see." Then he added: "Can you hold your hand at an angle approaching forty-five degrees behind you, and see what is in it, or read writing in the palm?" I confessed my inability. He did it. Certainly the writing was not small, it was indeed large. Holding cards at that angle he could see them perfectly.

He told me his history. Some day I shall write it, from what he told me and what I knew about him; and it will be as sensational as anything that a writer of detective stories—not even excluding the author of "Sherlock Holmes"—ever invented. Here in London Fargo's experience created one of the most interesting police episodes of our time.

He was the son of a Cree Indian mother and of a father half French, half American. His eyesight was certainly so extraordinary as to seem abnormal, but what he did in the way of seeing at acute angles, and what he did in the way of reading while looking straight into the eyes of the person in front of him, I am satisfied was only the work of a genius at that kind of thing, but was not abnormal. Needless to say, Fargo's hand was as educated as his eye. His fingers were as swift as those of the most expert juggler I ever saw upon the stage; and, of course, it is on this very swiftness the juggler relies. His whole success depends upon the inability of the ordinary person to see as quickly as he moves. His sleight of hand is made possible by the fact that all the senses of the individuals who see him are not working harmoniously and with equal skill at the same time. He depends upon the people who are listening to his patter not to see his wonderful sleight of hand. The harmonious working of all the senses properly trained would prevent the prestidigatateur from deceiving you. He knows that half-cultivated senses can be tricked by senses highly expert; he knows that most people can only see one or a very few things at a time, whereas the man with the trained senses is automatically seeing very many things at a time. The person with a less cultivated sense concentrates the mind upon one thing in order to make the sense active, but the highly cultivated sense registers without any especial effort of the will upon the sense.

THE CONVICT'S OBJECT LESSON

The obvious criticism is that we cannot all be Fargos and Maskelynes. That is true. We cannot all be great athletes—there is only one Sandow to several millions of people; but the scientific application of Sandow's principles has made vast numbers of people sounder in constitution, in wind and limb, and in the facility of the senses. It is not to be expected that everybody is going to cultivate an eye that will look round the corner, or a hand like that of the great Barrington, the expert thief, who, while a convict in Australia, gave a brilliant example of his power.

The governor's wife summoned him, talked with him a while, and asked him to give some exhibition of his skill. He said: "Madam, I have already done so." He had abstracted her handkerchief and several articles of value while her attention had been distracted during their conversation by some act or motion of his. Perhaps Barrington is better known to the present generation by the famous couplet written by him while he was a convict at Botany Bay:

> True patriots we, for be it understood
> We left our country for our country's good.

The success of the street thief is very largely due to the cultivation of the senses —to acute observation. He is scientific in a real sense as far as he goes. At the one end of the scale are such as Pasteur, Kelvin, Charcot, M. and Mme. Curie, and at the other end are the *gamin* of Seven Dials; and between is such as Cinquevalli, who, with his skilled senses, pleases the world and profits himself; and while Mme. Curie observes for humanity, humanity is the victim of the observant thieving *gamin*.

A DANGER SIGNAL

The senses should be educated not alone to secure more vision, observation, skilfulness, scope, but they should be deliberately educated for thought's sake. I am not a scientist, but if my conception of the beginning of things is right, all thought had its beginning in the senses as well as its vehicle through the senses. How often we find ourselves thinking of an abstract thing in some mathematical form, such as the roundness of a ball, the opaqueness of a piece of wood, the form of a triangle, or the undulation of a wave. Man at the beginning came to language through his senses, and when one says he sees deeply, or he feels deeply, it is only the definition of the primitive and fundamental experience.

Helen Keller, who had neither sight nor hearing, came to a knowledge of life and thought through feeling only. No sound taught her, no vision conveyed to her what things meant; no voice told her that there was a God or that she had a mother; but she came to feel it and, therefore, to know it, and in her history you have the development of three senses to the uses of the five, two being omitted which are regarded as vital to knowledge.

If it may be that we are at a stage of development in which the senses are not playing their full part; where we are only specializing in narrow fields of observation and through a limited number of trained observers; that we are not cultivating the senses sufficiently in our schools, both elementary and secondary, and also in the public schools, which are the most inefficient in this direction, the danger to modern life will be great. It will mean a lack of thoroughness, of precision, of comprehension, a want of decision.

STRAWS IN THE WIND

Newspaper reporting, unless it is the purely literal kind, shows inaccurate hearing and perception. Purely mechanical, automatic stenography is well done, but if you are dependent upon the reproduction of your thought or the condensation of words, you will often wish that you had never spoken. Hearing, which is the chief sense used by the stenographer, is so little assisted by a concentrated intelligence that inaccuracy is all too common. At the same time there is occasionally a marvelous example of cultivated observation, of accurate memory, of harmonized action of all the senses.

One of the most notable is the condensation of speeches for the *Times* in the gallery of the House of Commons. Without any detraction of the capacity of the representatives of other journals, the skill shown by the *Times* gallery man—or men—is remarkable. Many a speaker has had more than justice done to his possibly spasmodic or discursive utterances by the condensation which he reads with a sense of relief in this great organ of a people, which employs experts to do expert work.

Inaccurate memory of what is heard, however, has become startlingly dangerous. In the law courts daily you have two people—sometimes more—giving diametrically opposite reports of the same conversation. Mechanical skill of a machine-like character is on the increase, but the observation which makes for capable initiative does not appear to be increasing. It would be interesting to ask a hundred oculists of experience on the one hand, and a hundred manufacturers whose workmen have to apply science and art to industry on the other, whether they are satisfied that the steadiness and control of the mind which a registering eye gives is developing. To a registering eye—an eye which sees and photographs—there comes, under stress of the senses and the illumination which follows, a moving picture of innumerable things in their proper places, the automatic memory of the thousand visualized objects. To a novelist visualization, which is so dependent on the trained, keen, and vigorous use of the senses, is the means by which he makes pictures of the imagination seem real, and it is also the means by which he reproduces accurately what he has observed. Memory to him is largely photography.

In this connection it is interesting to note the chemistry of the thing. Public speaking is part of one's profession of politics, and it has been my experience when studying my memoranda beforehand to feel that the figures particularly were very uncertainly fixed in the memory and mind. On the platform, however, under the excitement and passion—I refer to intellectual passion—of the moment, the figures and collected facts which seemed so hard to see and hold before the hour of speaking passed before the mind's eye in the form of a vivid photograph of the page on which they were. No doubt many other public speakers have the same experience.

THE PRICE OF VELOCITY

On a recent visit to the United States, where the tides of life flow with greater velocity than in England, men in the control of large affairs right and left said they regarded the lack of trained observation as the chief origin of the defects—the very grave defects—which exist in that splendid and wonderfully organized nation. The idealism, the vision, the adaptability, the training which enables the United States to organize upon a large scale are thrown into chaos and catastrophe, as the constant railway accidents show, by lack of the decision and the precision which belong to expert observation and the firm control of the senses. As the tide increases in velocity in the smaller area of Great Britain and in its terribly congested life, the trouble will greatly increase there.

Let us not be blind. It is obvious that our age has the defects of its great virtues. The gifts of civilization have made existence in one sense too easy for us. We still may rightly hold this belief, however, that our race will steady itself, will pick up all the loose ends of its development, will organize itself upon a basis of common sense; that it will continue to preserve itself in all regions of thought and action. If, then, this article may seem to travel into dark alleys, it is certainly not for amusement, nor to set up ninepins for the pleasure of seeing them knocked down, but to ask whether we are traveling with sufficient precaution as we go onward over the paths of civilization.

THE CITY

The city lies upon the ground
That slopes toward the bay.
Have you not heard the city's sound
Like the far baying of a hound
Close on the hunter's prey?

So many leagues the city calls,
So many thousands hear,
There is a constant host that crawls
Toward the busy, barren walls
That it shall help to rear.

The city needs each eager hand
Of all that eager throng;
They do not always understand—
The city needs each eager band,
But does not need it long.

The streets where strangers walk alone
With population seethe.
There is not any hint of home;
The earth is overlaid with stone
Until it cannot breathe.

There are strange glimpses of delights
That poverty debars;
There are the brilliant, crowded nights—
The city has so many lights
One cannot see the stars.

The people shift as in a sieve
That shakes without a pause;
There is so little time to live,
No one has any thought to give
But to his little cause.

So comes the host from far and wide,
To strive and strive again;
A few shall swell the city's pride,
But, ah, the great defeated tide
Of women and of men!

Mary L. Bray

OUR FIFTEEN YEARS' WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

A BRILLIANT, AUTHORITATIVE SUMMING UP OF THE MARVELOUS CHANGES WE HAVE WROUGHT THERE IN HALF A GENERATION

BY DEAN C. WORCESTER

THIS article by Dean Worcester is a fact statement, charmingly told, of the amazing advance of civilization in the Philippine Islands since they were ceded by Spain to the United States, fifteen years ago this month. The very eloquence of the facts themselves makes it read like a romance. It is the story of the redemption of 8,000,000 people from ignorance and from savagery.

Mr. Worcester is peculiarly well qualified to discuss this subject, for it was his good fortune to visit the islands twice on scientific expeditions while they were still a dependency of Spain. These visits gave him a knowledge that enables him to contrast accurately the conditions of to-day with those that obtained under the Spanish régime.

Moreover, his official position in the Philippines since we took them over equips him to speak with authority on what we have done there. He was a member of the first Philippine Commission appointed by President McKinley in 1899 and thereafter, from 1901 until three months ago was Secretary of the Interior for the Philippine insular government. His scientific trips to the islands were made in 1887, and in 1890, when he spent three years there.

Mr. Worcester is a graduate of the University of Michigan, in which he was made a professor before his appointment as Philippine commissioner. The paper that follows is from the pen of a scholar, a scientist, and a man of the world.

It shows vividly and impressively what a rich, civilized, Christian nation can do for an ignorant and barbaric race, and fixes the responsibility of enlightened nations to those struggling in the darkness.—THE EDITOR.

FIFTEEN years have passed since the United States acquired sovereignty over the Philippines. What have we accomplished there?

One of the most important results of our stewardship has been the establishment of good order throughout practically the entire archipelago.

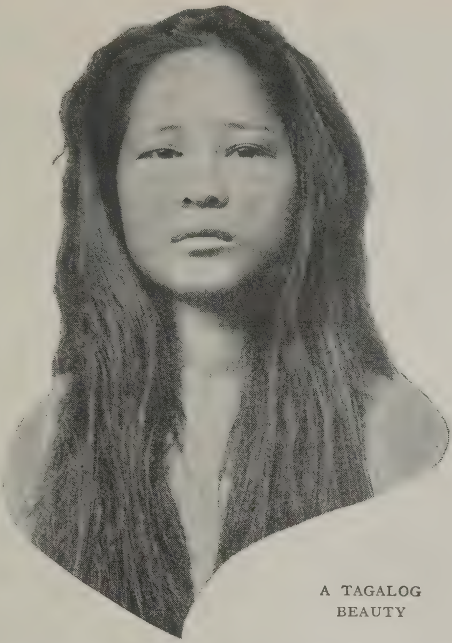
It was my fortune to travel for four years in the islands during Spanish days.

There were then extensive regions where no white man had ever penetrated. Now practically all of them have been explored.

There were other great districts into which Spanish officers did not dare to venture without strong armed escorts because of the hostility of their wild, savage inhabitants. Now women ride through them alone and in perfect safety and with no fear of molestation from natives.

Acts of piracy were still often committed by the Moros, and even in the territory of the Filipinos* brigandage was common, and bandit leaders who did not molest the people of their own towns were often considered heroes by the latter. In Cavite and Batangas Spanish priests were compelled to pay for immunity from attack. Even in Manila people were sometimes kidnaped by brigands.

Conditions were especially bad in Mindoro, a great island in sight from



A TAGALOG BEAUTY

THE TAGALOGS, OF MALAY STOCK, HAD AN ALPHABET AND SOME CULTURE EVEN IN PRE-SPANISH TIMES

FILIPINOS READY FOR A DANCE. THE GIRLS DANCE WHILE THE BOYS BEAT TIME WITH STICKS AND SOMETIMES CHANT IN SIMPLE RHYTHM the mouth of Manila Bay, and evil-doers who took refuge in its somber forests knew that they were safe from pursuit.

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* By this term I designate collectively the eight civilized Christianized peoples called respectively: Cagayans, Ilocanos, Pangasinans, Zambalans, Pampangans, Tagalogs, Bicols, and Visayans.

In 1901 I started from Calapan, its capital, for a walk to Bacó, three miles up the beach, carrying a heavy repeating rifle over my shoulder. My Spanish friends told me that I would not get through alive and bade me good-by.

We have changed all this. When I left the Philippines, three months ago, slavery and piracy were things of the past in the Moro country and there was not known to be an armed *ladrón* band or a bandit chief at large in the archipelago. This in spite of the fact that brigandage had become more prevalent than ever during the revolt of 1896 against Spain and the subsequent revolt against the United States, which ended only after a prolonged period of guerrilla warfare that bred criminals and struck at the very roots of good government.

In bringing about these profound changes we sought to avoid the use of cruel or unnecessarily harsh measures, and successfully employed the Filipinos themselves in the reestablishing of good order in their country. The Filipino insular police force of Spain, known as the Guardia Civil, was universally execrated. As the result of our humane policy the constabulary, our present Filipino insular police force, is as popular as any such body can be if it does its duty.

Radical reforms in the administration of justice have helped to restore order and to make life and property safe. I should far exceed the limits of a magazine article were I to describe the intricacies of the

BEFORE THE AMERICAN RÉGIME. A TYPE OF THE ROADS IN THE PHILIPPINES WHICH HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY HIGHWAYS CONSTRUCTED BY MODERN METHODS. THESE OLD-TIME ROADS WERE DESTROYED ALMOST AS SOON AS BUILT BY THE NARROW-RIMMED WHEELS OF THE NATIVE CARTS. THE USE OF THESE WHEELS HAS NOW BEEN FORBIDDEN. IN THE RAINY SEASON THESE ROADS WERE FORMERLY ALMOST IMPASSABLE.

AFTER THE AMERICANS CAME. A TYPICAL ROAD IN THE PHILIPPINES TO-DAY. THOUSANDS OF MILES OF GOOD ROADS, ON WHICH AUTOMOBILES MAY SAFELY BE DRIVEN AT HIGH SPEED, HAVE BEEN BUILT. THESE ROADS ARE SUPPLEMENTED BY CART AND HORSE TRAILS PENETRATING THE HIGHLANDS

A FRAIL, CRUDELY BUILT BUKIDNON HOUSE OF THE OLD STYLE, NOW REPLACED BY THE TYPE OF HOUSE SHOWN IN THE ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE 71

judicial system established in the Philippines by Spain. Under it delays were interminable and lawsuits endless. Spanish judges and other court officials were often corrupt and venal. What masqueraded as justice was frequently bought and sold.

Persons accused of crime could be kept in jail for years without trial, as bail was not allowed if the penalty for the crime charged might exceed six months' imprisonment.

We found in the insular penitentiary a number of unfortunates who had been confined without trial so long that all record of the cases against them had been lost.

Defendants in criminal cases were formerly not allowed to be present during the period of investigation called the *sumario*. They now may appear and defend themselves in person or by counsel at every stage of the proceedings against them; must be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; may testify in their own behalf; cannot be forced to testify against themselves; may be confronted by, and examine, hostile witnesses; may have compulsory process issued to obtain witnesses in their favor; must have speedy and public trial; and must be admitted to bail unless charged with capital offenses.

All of these rights were denied them under Spanish rule, and men were tried without previously having been informed of the charges against them.

Writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, and prohibition were also unknown before the American occupation.

Fees were often very excessive. They have been made moderate. Justices of the peace were dependent upon fees for compensation, hence stirred up litigation. Now they receive salaries. Regular sessions of Courts of First Instance are held in every province. Appeals may be taken from these courts to the Supreme Court of the Philippine Islands, and from it, in certain cases, to the Supreme Court of the United States.

These new rights and remedies assure to all the inhabitants of the Philippines privileges and safeguards previously unknown, and speedy, even-handed justice has been brought within the reach of all.

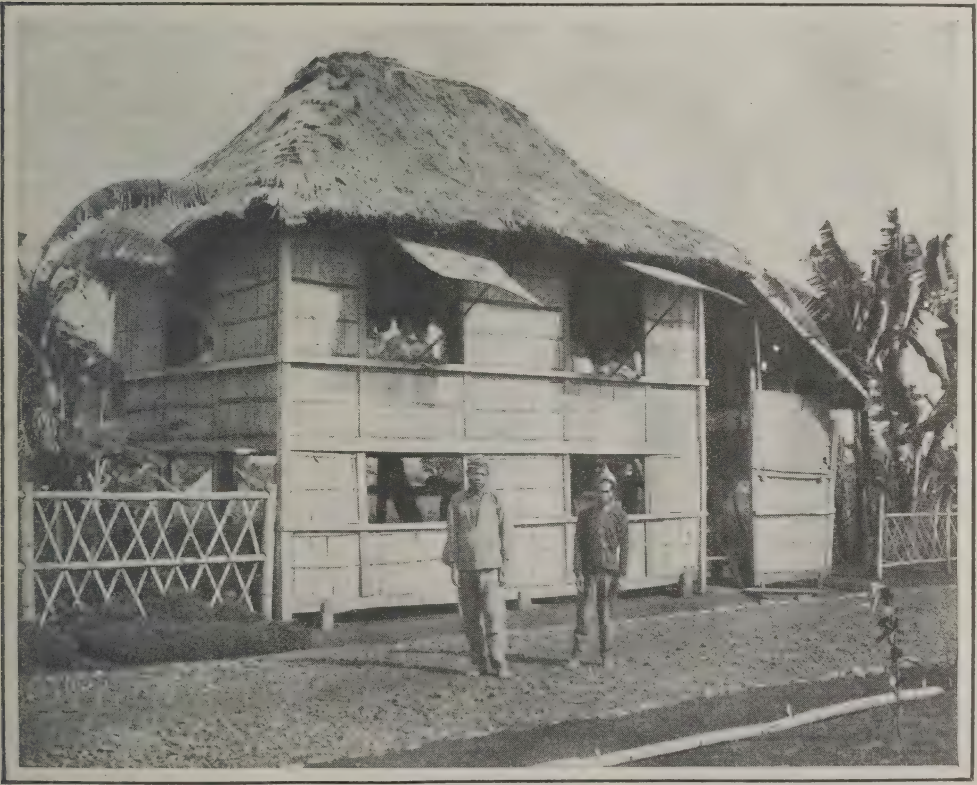
Under Spanish rule sanitary conditions were shocking. Even in Manila there was no system for the disposal of human waste, which was often thrown into the streets at night. The city obtained its drinking water from the Mariquina River. Some fifteen thousand people lived above the intake on or near the banks of this stream. Many of them washed their clothes and their persons in its waters, which were further defiled by the drainage from their villages.

Manila now has a modern sewer system. It gets its water from a practically uninhabited mountain region, and the mortality from water-borne diseases has in consequence greatly decreased.

The people of the provinces formerly obtained their drinking water from open springs, running streams, or shallow surface wells. It was almost invariably infected with disease-producing organisms. Oftener than not laundry work was done close around village wells and foul wash-water drained back into them. How many times have my subordinates traced deadly local outbreaks of cholera to this source!

A "sacred spring" of fresh water which appeared in Manila Bay and started a lively little cholera epidemic proved to have its origin in a broken sewer-pipe. I well remember begging the people of Nueva Ecija to boil their water when their province was being swept by cholera. To my surprise, many of them assured me that they had long done so. I found that they had actually been drinking boiled water two or three times a week believing it to be a potent immunizer! In another case it was kept in a bottle labeled "The American Medicine" and was given to ill persons in teaspoonful doses.

The only way to protect such a population from cholera, dysentery, and typhoid fever is to make good water easier to get



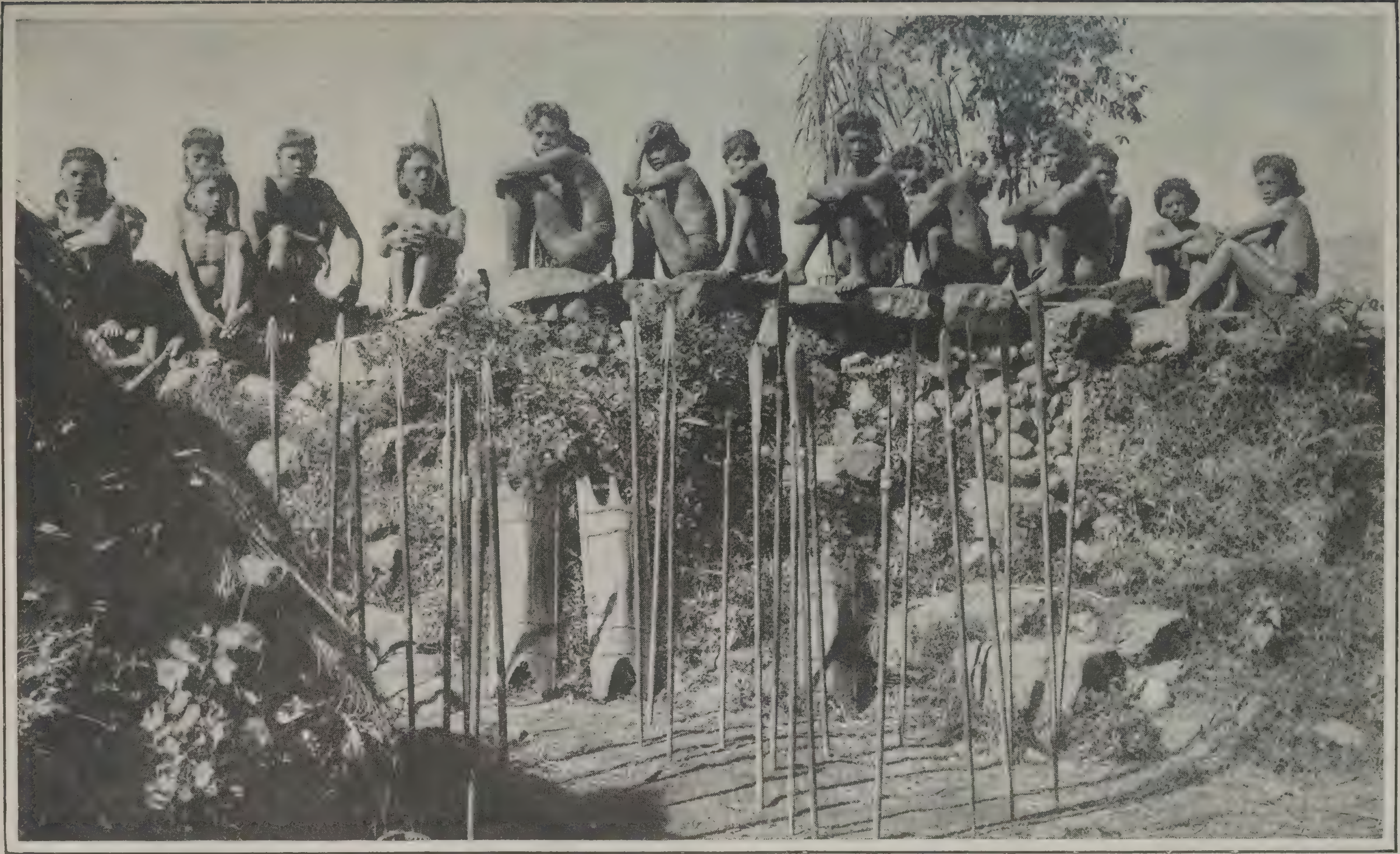
A BUKIDNON HOUSE OF THE NEW AND BETTER TYPE. THE ROOF IS OF GRASS, THE SIDES ARE MADE OF GREEN BAMBOO JOINTS SPLIT AND FLATTENED OUT, AND THE FRAMEWORK IS OF WOOD. THIS HOUSE GIVES A DEGREE OF PRIVACY IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN IN THE OLD TYPE

FILIPINO ATHLETES ON THE CINDER TRACK. ATHLETICS HAVE BEEN A WONDERFUL FACTOR IN FOSTERING BETTER PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AMONG THE FILIPINOS. SPORTS OF THIS NATURE AMONG THE NATIVES AROSE AS A RESULT OF THE INTEREST GRADUALLY AROUSED BY GAMES PLAYED BY OUR SOLDIERS. LATER, SCHOOL CHILDREN WERE PERSUADED BY THEIR TEACHERS TO PLAY SIMILAR GAMES

than bad. We have done this in many towns by drilling some eight hundred and fifty artesian wells, many of which flow very freely. The mortality has frequently decreased fifty per cent in towns after artesian drinking water became available.

Smallpox was considered a necessary disease of childhood. I have often seen children badly broken out with it mingling freely with healthy youngsters. Indeed, parents deliberately communicated it to their offspring in order to have what they deemed an inevitable calamity over with and to find whether there was a chance that their little ones might grow up. The known annual mortality from this disease alone was 40,000 to 60,000, and in the three provinces immediately adjacent to Manila, averaged 6,000.

MOROS IN THEIR NATIVE COSTUMES. THE MOROS ARE THE UNRULY MOHAMMEDANS OF THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES WHO, UNTIL RECENTLY, HAVE INDULGED IN PIRACY AND SLAVE-HUNTING, BUT HAVE NOW BEEN BROUGHT UNDER EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT CONTROL



FILIPINO HEAD-HUNTERS AWAITING AN ATTACK. NOTE THE SPEARS STUCK IN THE GROUND WHILE THEIR SAVAGE OWNERS, PERCHED ON A NATURAL BARRIER, SIT READY TO SEIZE THEM. BELOW THE "GARRISON" ARE TO BE SEEN SEVERAL SHIELDS. THE CHECKING OF HEAD-HUNTING IS ONE OF THE FEATS OF THE AMERICAN INSULAR GOVERNMENT

"CANNED" MUSIC IN THE FOREST. BONTOC IGOROTES GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE PHONOGRAPH. APPARENTLY THEY ARE ENJOYING THE EXPERIENCE. NOTE THE SMILE OF THE SAVAGE IMMEDIATELY BACK OF THE MACHINE

JUST BOYS. THREE LITTLE TAGALOGS FEASTING ON FRUIT

We have performed more than ten million vaccinations and have practically eliminated smallpox as a factor in the death rate. Its victims now total only 700 or 800 per year, and are mostly very young children left unprotected through the neglect of careless Filipino municipal officers.

Malaria was prevalent in certain regions. The stuff formerly sold as quinin at almost prohibitive prices was often composed chiefly of corn-starch or plaster of Paris. By giving away annually several million doses of pure quinin, and punishing severely those who sold it in adulterated form, we have greatly decreased the mortality from this disease. It has been further materially lessened by filling or draining many mosquito-breeding pools and swamps.

Leprosy was disseminated throughout the archipelago. We were assured in good faith by churchmen that its victims numbered at least 30,000. Investigation proved that many supposed lepers were really suffering from curable ailments, and we were able to restore large numbers of them to society.

The true lepers numbered approximately 6,000. We isolated them at Culion, a sanitary and attractive town with waterworks, sewer system, an excellent hospital, an entertainment hall, a store, a post-office, and other public buildings. Here they are humanely cared for and are allowed the fullest liberty. They suffer no hardship save the inevitable one of separation from their relatives and friends, and the latter are at liberty to visit them under proper restrictions.

Since this policy was inaugurated the total number of lepers has decreased about one-half, and the number of new cases has rapidly diminished. Steady adherence to the present policy will soon rid the islands of this curse.

The cause of that previously mysterious ailment, beriberi, was discovered almost simultaneously in Burma by Frazer and in the Philippines by Aaron. In the latter country it killed outright some 5,000 people annually and more or less permanently disabled 40,000 to 50,000 more. It was also an important indirect factor in the dreadful infant mortality through its weakening effect on mothers.

Having learned that it resulted from a diet too largely composed of polished rice, hitherto considered a superior article of food, I appealed to Governor-General Forbes to prohibit the use of polished rice. He issued the necessary order. Beriberi promptly disappeared from all government institutions, and the constabulary and the Philippine scouts were also freed from it. As unpolished rice is cheaper and more nutritious than is the polished article, we have demonstrated to the Filipinos the possibility of ridding

A DETACHMENT OF THE BUKIDNON NATIVE POLICE FORCE. THE BUKIDNONS ARE A NON-CHRISTIAN TRIBE IN NORTHERN MINDANAO WHICH HAS PROGRESSED MORE RAPIDLY THAN ANY OTHER UNDER AMERICAN RULE

THE BEAUTIFUL CLUBHOUSE ERECTED AT MANILA BY THE ELKS. IT IS NEAR THE FAMED LUNETA OR OFFICIAL PROMENADE

their country of beriberi and of saving money at the same time.

In Spanish days Asiatic cholera periodically swept the archipelago, causing frightful mortality. Our own sanitarians were inexperienced in dealing with it at the outset, and the epidemic of 1902 cost about 100,000 lives. Even so, Filipinos in many regions claimed that the disease could not be cholera because the deaths were so few!

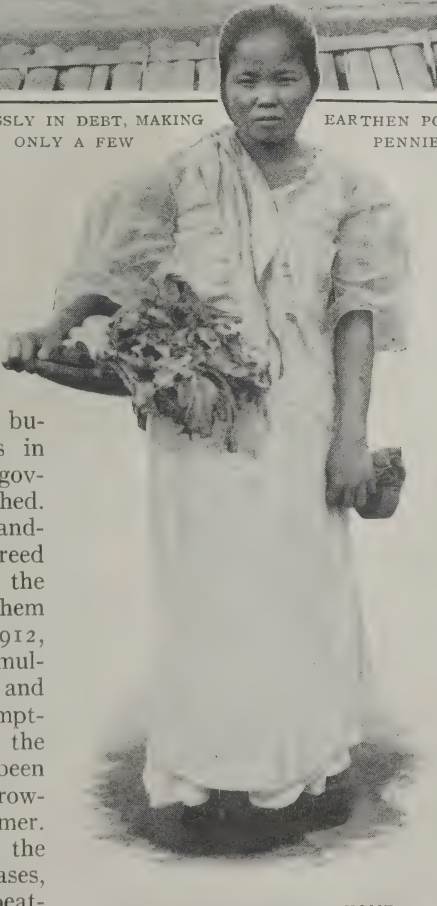
FILIPINO GIRLS LEARNING EMBROIDERY. A SCHOOL OF HOUSEHOLD ARTS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AT MANILA BY THE INSULAR GOVERNMENT

TYPICAL PEONS, HOPELESSLY IN DEBT, MAKING EARTHEN POTS AT HOME. THEIR WAGES ARE ONLY A FEW PENNIES A DAY

Each succeeding epidemic has been more successfully dealt with than its predecessor, and in 1911 we succeeded in ridding the archipelago of this scourge.

An epidemic of bubonic plague was in progress when civil government was established. We fought it to a standstill, and in 1906 freed the islands from the disease. We kept them free from it until 1912, when it appeared simultaneously at Manila and Iloilo. It was promptly eradicated at the latter place and has been held within the narrowest limits at the former.

Pneumonic plague, the most fatal of all diseases, has been stopped repeatedly at quarantine. Had our Public Health Service been less efficient it would have entered the islands with results not pleasant to contemplate.



SNAPPED ON HER WAY HOME FROM MARKET

In 1893 I found the wife of a Spanish friend dying of a surgically relievable ailment. I persuaded him to bring her to Manila for operation, only to find that there was not a surgeon in the islands who dared to open the human abdomen, or a place where such an operation could be safely performed. This condition continued up to 1898, and how many thousands of valuable lives were needlessly sacrificed only the Almighty knows.

The one public hospital was generally regarded as a place where homeless persons might go to die. Contagious-disease hospitals were practically unknown. As insane asylums were lacking, dangerously deranged persons were chained in or under dwellings, and were sometimes burned to death in the confusion incident to fearful conflagrations, which are lamentably common in towns built chiefly of palm-leaves and bamboo.

A TYPICAL FILIPINO WOMAN

We have established at Manila the largest and best general hospital in the tropics. Six to eight thousand patients are treated yearly in its beds, and 70,000 to 80,000 at its great free clinic.

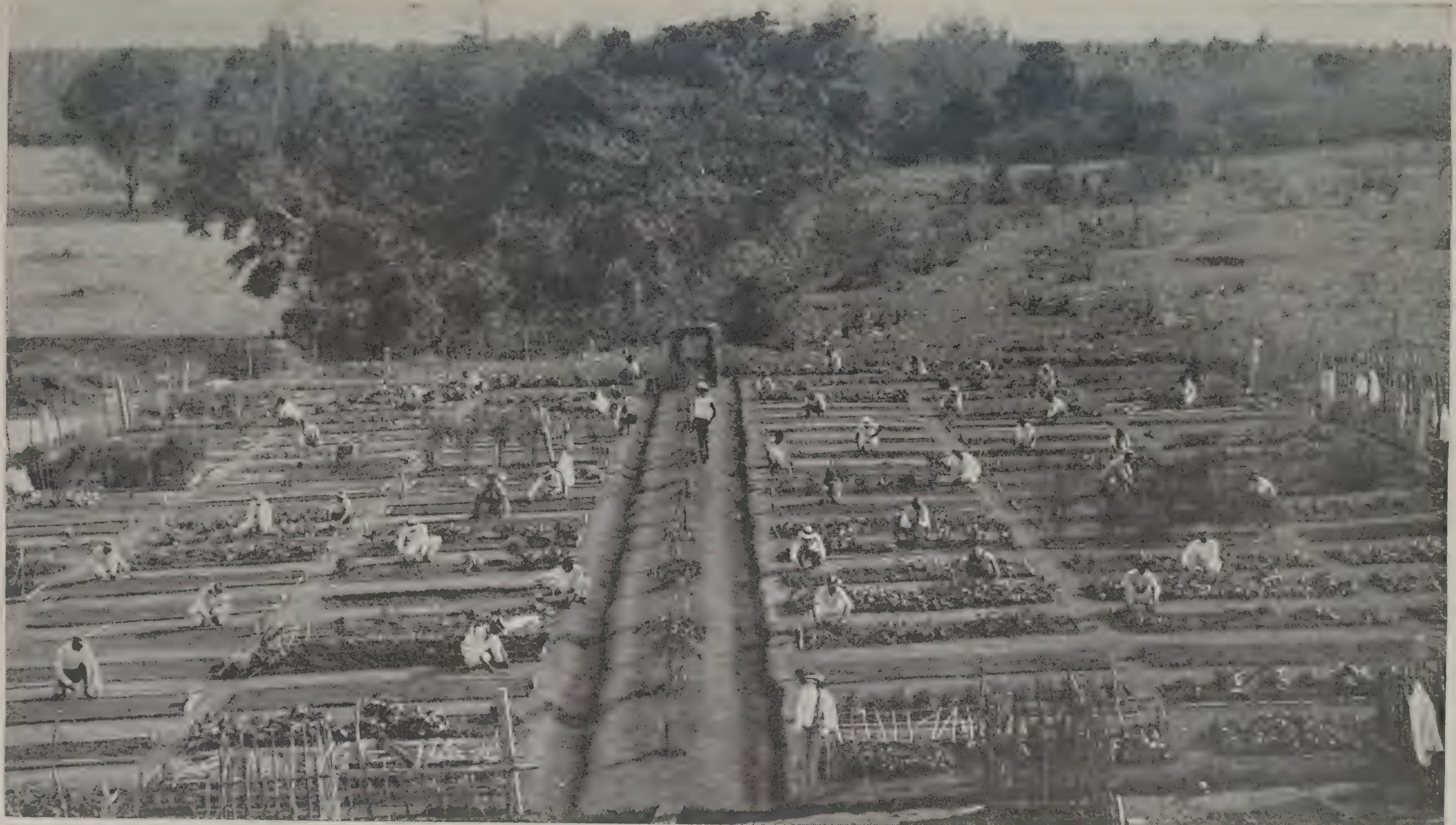
Other general hospitals have been established at Baguio, in the cool mountains of Benguet, at Cebu, in the Visayan Islands, at Bontoc, in the head-hunter's country, and at Butuan, in northern Mindanao. All are doing valuable work.

More than fifty per cent of the infants born in the islands die before completing their first year because of the ignorance of mothers and midwives, but the commodious lying-in ward of the Philippine General Hospital is now liberally patronized, and a confinement there is a real education to a Filipino woman. The work of ignorant municipal midwives, who looked after confinement cases among the poor and indulged in practises bordering on witchcraft, has been taken over by highly trained Filipino nurses.

We have established an excellent insane hospital at Manila, where many deranged persons are restored to reason and dangerous maniacs are prevented, by the most humane means, from harming others.

A large majority of the Filipino physi-

MODERN PROVINCIAL HIGH SCHOOL AT CEBU, BUILT OF REENFORCED CONCRETE. THE NEW SCHOOLS ARE NOT ONLY DESIGNED FOR UTILITY BUT ARE ALSO ARTISTIC



A TYPICAL SCHOOL GARDEN IN THE PHILIPPINES. THE TEACHING GIVEN WITH THE AID OF THESE INDIVIDUAL PLATS, SUPPLEMENTED BY LARGER GARDENS AT THE PUPILS' HOMES, IS PROVING MOST USEFUL. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED ALSO A NUMBER OF SO-CALLED FARM SETTLEMENT SCHOOLS, WHERE BOYS LEARN TO CULTIVATE THE MORE COMMON CROPS UPON A LARGE SCALE. THIS IS CONSTRUCTIVE WORK OF THE BEST TYPE, AS THE PHILIPPINES ARE ESSENTIALLY AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY cians were grossly incompetent, and there were no Filipino surgeons worthy of the name. These conditions resulted from lack of proper educational facilities. We have established an excellent medical college. Its students get valuable practical experience in the free wards of the general hospital, and many of its graduates become interns at that institution. We are thus training up competent physicians and surgeons. They are sadly needed. One of them recently saved the life of an American official by a difficult surgical operation, performed without proper facilities. The patient had refused to let a Filipino doctor touch him until his condition had become desperate.

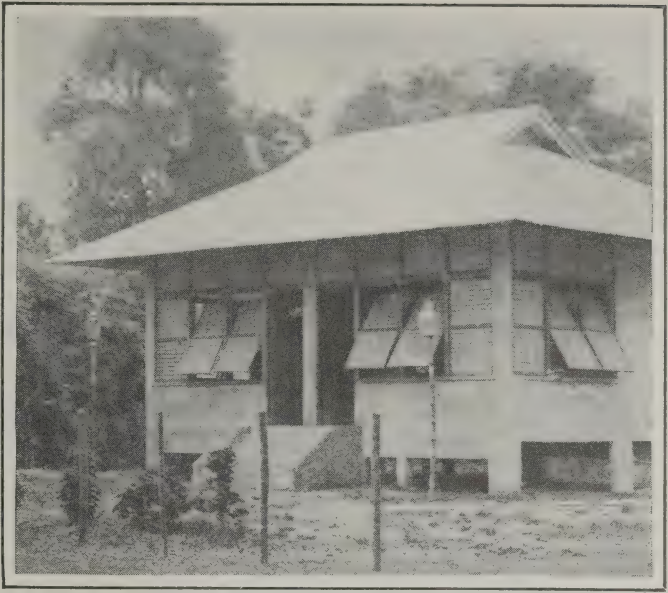
The education of young Filipinos of both sexes as nurses at a government training-school is an unqualified success. They become skilful, patient, and kind.

We have been much less successful in training competent sanitarians. Many of our Filipino district health officers, who have immediate charge of the public health work in the provinces, are letter-perfect. They know what ought to be done, but lack the courage to do it.

Last August I severely reproved the district health officer of Masamis for letting the towns of his province become filthy. He said: "What can I do? If I am to make the people clean up I shall have to begin with the provincial governor!" I told him that would be the best possible way to begin, and I am sure he thought me crazy!

AN OLD-STYLE THATCHED ROOF SCHOOLHOUSE, WITH SIDES OF SPLIT BAMBOO, FOUND IN THE VILLAGES

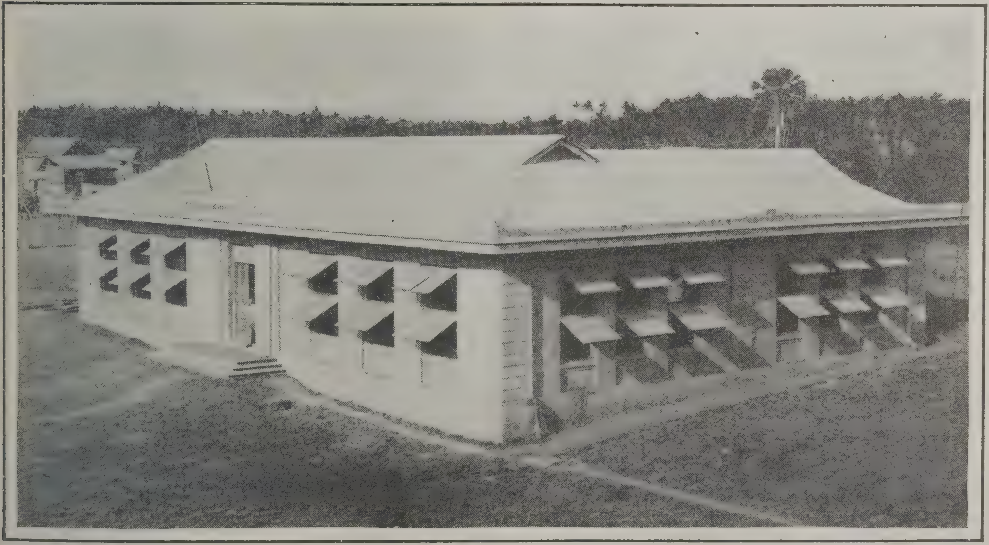
The annual death rate among convicts in Bilibid prison at Manila was formerly shocking. We have reduced it to thirteen to the thousand, while among government officers and employees the death rate has been brought to below five for Americans and four for Filipinos.



A "BARRIO" OR VILLAGE SCHOOLHOUSE. THIS PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS A MODERN SCHOOLHOUSE OF THE SMALLEST SIZE WHICH WE BUILD IN THE PHILIPPINES. SUCH STRUCTURES ARE TAKING THE PLACE OF THE HUTS OF BAMBOO AND NIPA-PALM LEAVES, WHICH FORMED THE OLD-TIME SCHOOLHOUSES IN THE ISLANDS

It is a significant fact that the most striking results in improving sanitary conditions have been obtained in certain provinces inhabited chiefly by wild people and subject to very direct American control. It is a common thing to have Filipinos ask for American doctors and American district health officers. During the 1912 elections two candidates for office, denounced as lepers by political rivals made the long journey to Manila and begged me to have them examined by an American bacteriologist. Both proved negative for leprosy.

Ignorance and superstition were by no means confined to the people of the wild tribes. Belief in the power of certain charms called "antíng-antíng," to make their wearers invulnerable, was wide-spread among the Filipinos. Houses were tightly closed at night, and in cases of sickness or confinement, by day as well, to keep out the *asuáng,* other mythical animals, and evil spirits. Miraculous healers sprang up like mushrooms. People were frequently



A TYPICAL PROVINCIAL TRADE-SCHOOL, OF WHICH THERE IS ONE IN EACH OF THE THIRTY-NINE PROVINCES WHERE THERE IS NO MANUAL-TRAINING DEPARTMENT CONNECTED WITH THE REGULAR PROVINCIAL SCHOOL murdered for practising witchcraft by their supposed victims or the friends of the latter.

The American schoolmaster seemed the best remedy for such conditions, and he began his work before the smoke of battle had cleared away.

Illiteracy was the rule. Less than ten per cent of the population could read and write Spanish, and of those many knew little more than a few prayers and a bit of catechism taught them by some friendly priest.

Of the 1,200,000 children of school age only 177,000 enjoyed even the very primitive educational facilities provided under Spanish rule.

In July, 1913, the total enrolment of pupils in the public schools was 530,000, of whom 490,000 were attending primary schools, 30,000 intermediate schools, and 6,000 secondary schools, and the remainder taking special industrial work.

One of the fundamental difficulties in the way of welding the several different peoples of the Philippines into one is the lack of a common language. We are meeting it by teaching all school children English.

Not only can they pursue ordinary academic studies, but they may take special courses in diets and cooking, lacemaking, embroidery, Irish crochet, hat-weaving, basketry, or macramé work. Instruction in hygiene, the care of the sick, household sanitation, and the feeding and care of infants was taken by 15,227 girls during 1912.

A BASEBALL TEAM OF IGOROTE BOYS, MEMBERS OF ONE OF THE MOST UNCIVILIZED OF THE ISLAND PEOPLES. BASEBALL HAS BECOME A PASSION WITH EVEN THE WILD FILIPINOS AND HAS DONE MORE TO ABOLISH COCK-FIGHTING AND COCKPIT GAMBLING THAN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE REFORMERS COMBINED. BASEBALL HAS ALSO DONE MUCH TO AROUSE A SPIRIT OF SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY HITHERTO ALMOST UNKNOWN AMONG THE TRIBESMEN

Gardening, taught in school gardens supplemented by home gardens, is proving most useful. There are a number of so-called farm-settlement schools, where boys learn to cultivate the more common crops upon a large scale.

Each of the thirty-nine Philippine provinces has either a trade-school with first-

A DAILY SCENE IN A FILIPINO MARKET-PLACE. MOST OF THE VENDING IS DONE IN THE OPEN AIR

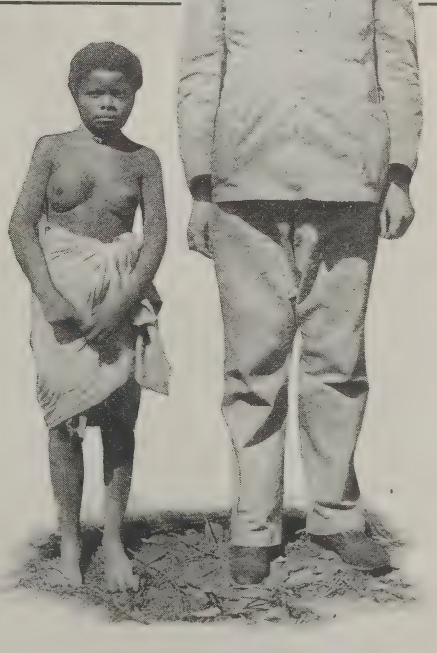
class equipment or a manual-training department connected with the provincial school. We have established at Manila an Insular Trade-School, a School of Household Arts for the training of Filipino women, a great normal school, where students of both sexes are fitted to teach, and a modern university with colleges of liberal arts, veterinary science, engineering, medicine and surgery, law and agriculture, and a School of Fine Arts as well. Pharmacy is taught in the College of Liberal Arts and forestry in the College of Agriculture.

The government printing-office has been made a great industrial school, and ninety-five per cent of its work is now done by Filipinos. Many young men trained within its walls have found profitable posts.

The Bureau of Lands conducts a practical school in surveying, the graduates of which are filling a dire need.

There is even a good school in Bilibid prison.

Another very important achievement is



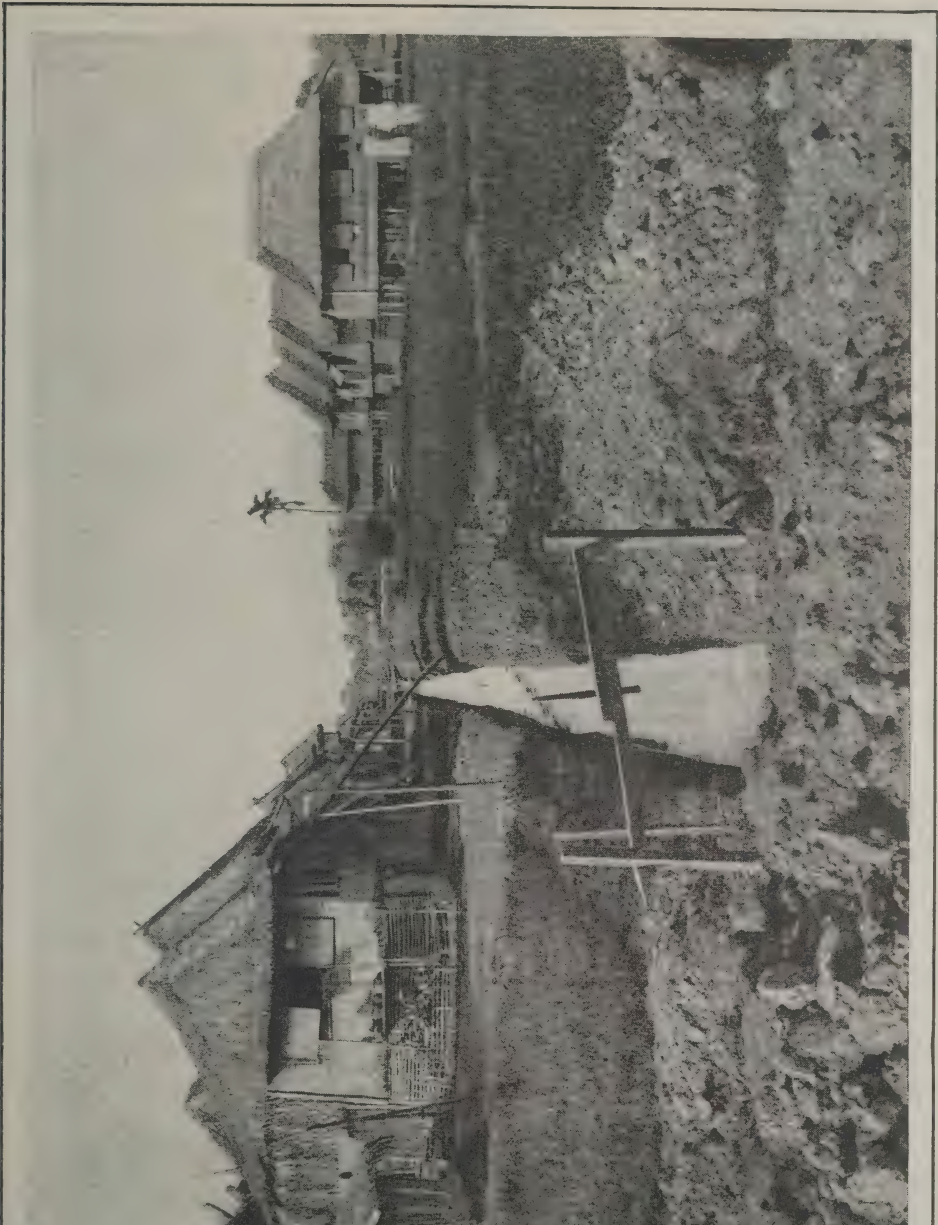
THE AUTHOR AND A FULL-GROWN NEGRITO WOMAN, MOTHER OF TWO CHILDREN. THE NEGRITOS ARE THE SMALLEST RACE OF TO-DAY. THEIR AVERAGE STATURE IS 58 INCHES

FILIPINO LADS LEARNING BLACKSMITHING, FOR WHICH MANY OF THEM SHOW A NATURAL APTITUDE, AND IN WHICH THEY BECOME VERY SKILFUL

the popularizing of athletic sports and contests. The wealthier Filipinos were weaklings. This was due in part to improper food, in part to lack of sufficient exercise, and also, to a great extent, to premature marriage.

Of 178 university students who recently received a careful physical examination,

A STONE SCHOOLHOUSE AND THE IFUGAO BOYS WHO NOT ONLY BUILT IT BUT DRESSED THE STONE FOR IT. EVERY BIT OF THE WORK WAS DONE BY THE BOYS THEMSELVES, UNDER INSTRUCTION, OF COURSE



ONE PHASE OF THE WONDERFUL SANITATION WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES. THIS DITCH WAS THE PRELIMINARY WORK IN DRAINING AND OTHERWISE MAKING HEALTHFUL A FILTHY VILLAGE STREET sixty-nine were found to be suffering from serious organic troubles.

Athletic sports had their beginnings as a result of interest gradually aroused in Filipinos by games played by our soldiers. Later, school children were persuaded by American teachers to play the same games. Results have exceeded all expectations. In many instances the improvement in the physical condition of pupils has been simply wonderful, while a spirit of fair play and sportsmanship, previously lacking, has sprung into being.

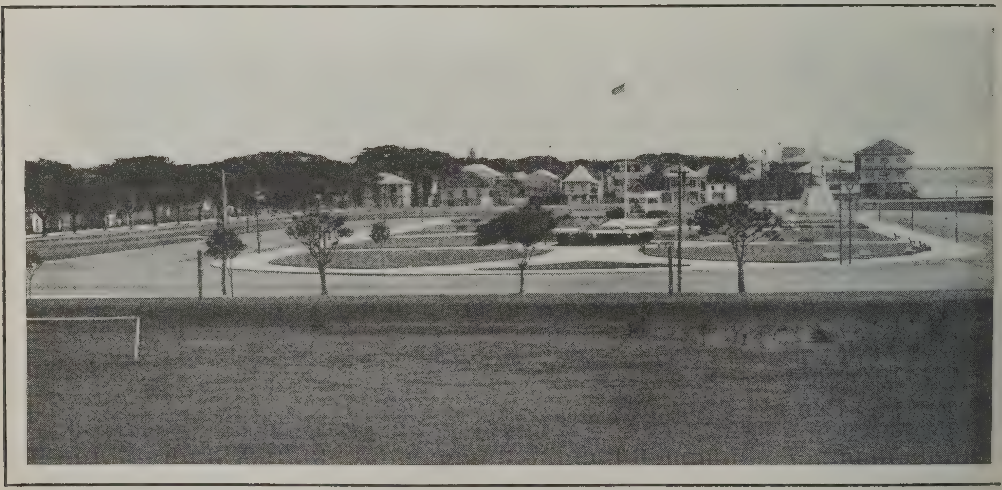
Baseball not only strengthens the muscles of the players, but sharpens their wits. Furthermore, it empties the cockpits to such an extent that their owners and beneficiaries have attempted to secure legislation restricting the days on which baseball may be played. It has done more toward abolishing cockpit gambling than have the laws passed by the Philippine Commission and the efforts of the Philippine Moral Progress League combined.

Even the wild people love baseball. It is a novel and interesting sight to see two opposing teams of young savages playing the game with obvious enjoyment of its refinements, while their ordinarily silent and reserved parents "root" with unbridled enthusiasm.

Annual meets between athletic teams in various groups of provinces, and the general interscholastic meet held each year at the Philippine carnival, have afforded opportunity for travel to boys who had never before left their homes and have helped to promote acquaintanceship between the several Filipino peoples.

It is estimated that some 800,000 chil-

AN ILONGOT SCHOOLGIRL. THE ILONGOTS ARE, NEXT TO THE NEGRITOS, THE WILDEST PEOPLE IN THE PHILIPPINES. THEY ARE FOREST DWELLERS. TWO SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN STARTED FOR THEM, AND THEIR CHILDREN HAVE PROVED TO BE BRIGHT AND TRACTABLE PUPILS



THE LUNETA, THE FAMOUS OFFICIAL PROMENADE OF MANILA, WHERE MANILA SOCIETY TAKES ITS DAILY DRIVE OR WALK WHILE A BAND PLAYS. IT IS ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN SPOTS IN THE ISLANDS dren would attend school without compulsion if given the opportunity. Unfortunately, the insular funds, which are derived almost entirely from import duties and internal-revenue taxes, are not sufficient to make it possible to give free education to so large a number. Yet the hope of the great brown mass of the Filipino people is in the generalization of academic and industrial instruction.

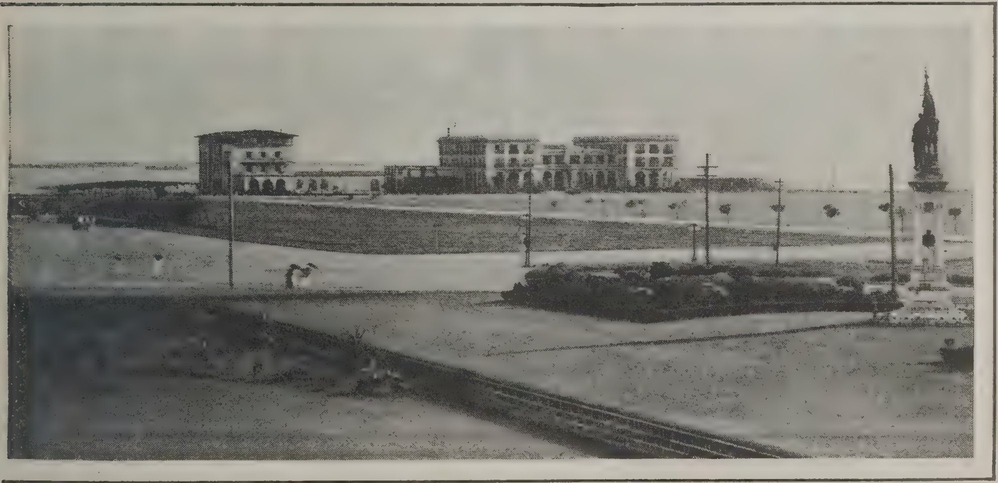
A TINGIAN WOMAN. THE TINGIANS ARE THE MOST HIGHLY CIVILIZED OF THE PHILIPPINE NON-CHRISTIAN TRIBES. THE WOMAN'S ARM-ORNAMENTS SHOWN HERE ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF THESE PEOPLE. HER WAIST SHOWS HER SKILL WITH THE EMBROIDERY NEEDLE

We do not know as yet what capabilities they possess. Bishop Brent has well said that the political leaders of to-day who call themselves Filipinos could with equal justice claim Spanish, other European, or Chinese nationality, so far as blood is concerned. We shall not know what are the possibilities of the dark-skinned people who form the bulk of the population until the school children of to-day have become the men and women of to-morrow.

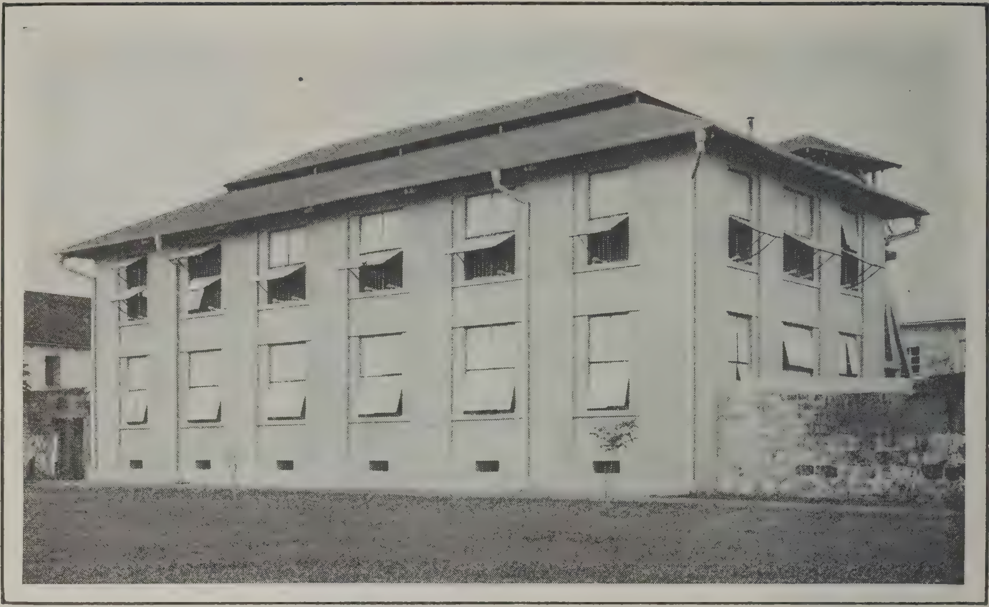
It is important that every child willing to take advantage of educational opportunities should receive them. If this is to be done, the commercial development of the islands must be stimulated and the volume of business increased in order to augment the insular revenues.

With rich soil, vast forests, healthful and varied climate, promising mineral resources, abundant labor, and a favorable situation with reference to great trade centers and main lines of travel the Philippines need only good government, adequate means of communication, and capital to bring about steady and rapid commercial progress.

These facts have been recognized, and due consideration has been given to developing the natural resources of the islands.



CONTINUATION OF THE LUNETA DISTRICT. THE GROUND HAS BEEN MADE BY THE MATERIAL DREDGED FROM MANILA BAY IN BUILDING THE NEW HARBOR. THE BUILDINGS ARE THE ARMY AND NAVY CLUB (LEFT) AND THE ELKS' CLUB



A WARD OF THE MODERN ST. LAZARE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS ESTABLISHED AT MANILA. FORMERLY, IN THE PHILIPPINES, THE INSANE WERE CHAINED IN OR UNDER DWELLINGS, AND MANY PERISHED IN THE CONFLAGRATIONS WHICH PERIODICALLY SWEPT THE TOWNS, IN WHICH THE HOUSES WERE BUILT CHIEFLY OF PALM-LEAVES AND BAMBOO. NOW ATTEMPTS ARE MADE TO FIND ALL THE AFFLICTED VICTIMS AND TO GIVE THEM MODERN HOSPITAL ATTENTION

SCENE IN THE TUBERCULOSIS WARD OF THE HOSPITAL AT BILIBID, THE INSULAR PENITENTIARY AT MANILA. BILIBID IS THE MOST NOTED PRISON IN ALL THE TROPICS. IN ITS MODERNLY EQUIPPED HOSPITAL THE DEATH RATE AMONG CONVICTS, FORMERLY SHOCKING, HAS BEEN CUT TO 13 PER 1,000. BEFORE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION, A HOSPITAL IN THE PHILIPPINES WAS LOOKED UPON SIMPLY AS A CONVENIENT PLACE IN WHICH POVERTY-STRICKEN PERSONS MIGHT DIE

Travel by sea was dangerous if vessels left a few well-defined routes which experience had demonstrated to be safe.

Although the Philippine coast-line is longer than that of the continental United States, we have already surveyed the greater and more important part of it, as well as the adjacent waters. We found only fifty-seven lighthouses. We have built eighty-nine, and the shores are now among the best lighted in the world. An admirable weather service gives timely warning of the approach of dangerous storms. Very extensive harbor improvements have been made at Manila, Cebu, and Iloilo.

The government has utilized its coast-guard vessels to build up new trade routes until they became commercially profitable, so that private companies were willing to take them over.

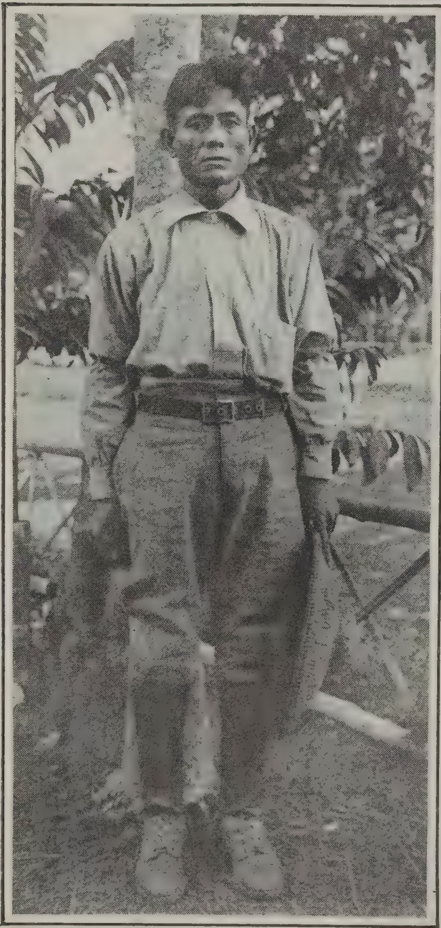
The improvement in means of land communication has been even greater. The 122 miles of railway which we found in 1898 have increased to 611. Such highways as the Spaniards had built were nearly or quite destroyed during the period of disorder from 1896 to 1901, and the use of wheeled transportation had become almost impossible. Indeed it was really impracticable to maintain good roads so long as the common vehicles of the country were carts with solid, narrow-rimmed wheels fixed on their axles and crude native sledges.

The use of these contrivances, most ingeniously designed for road destruction, has been prohibited, and we now have thousands of miles of well-constructed and admirably maintained highways over which automobiles can be safely driven at high speed. They are supplemented by an extensive system of cart and horse trails penetrating the highlands. Hundreds of thousands of farmers who previously had no encouragement to raise more than they could consume, because of their inability to sell their surplus products, have thus been brought within reach of the market.

THE RISING GENERATION. YOUTHFUL EDUCATED FILIPINOS OF THE TYPE WHICH WILL SOME DAY BE THE ISLANDS' GREATEST ASSET

The Philippines are essentially an agricultural country. Rinderpest, the most dangerous of all cattle plagues, was introduced in 1888 and spread unchecked through the archipelago, ultimately so reducing the supply of draft animals that only a small portion of the land previously under cultivation could be plowed. For years we have fought this disease ceaselessly, and natural reproduction has now restocked the islands with cattle to such an extent that it has been possible to produce record crops during the past two years. Furthermore, we have found an Indian breed of cattle which flourishes under Philippine conditions and is not susceptible to rinderpest.

FILIPINO MILK VENDERS, FAMILIAR SIGHTS IN MANILA AND THE LARGER TOWNS



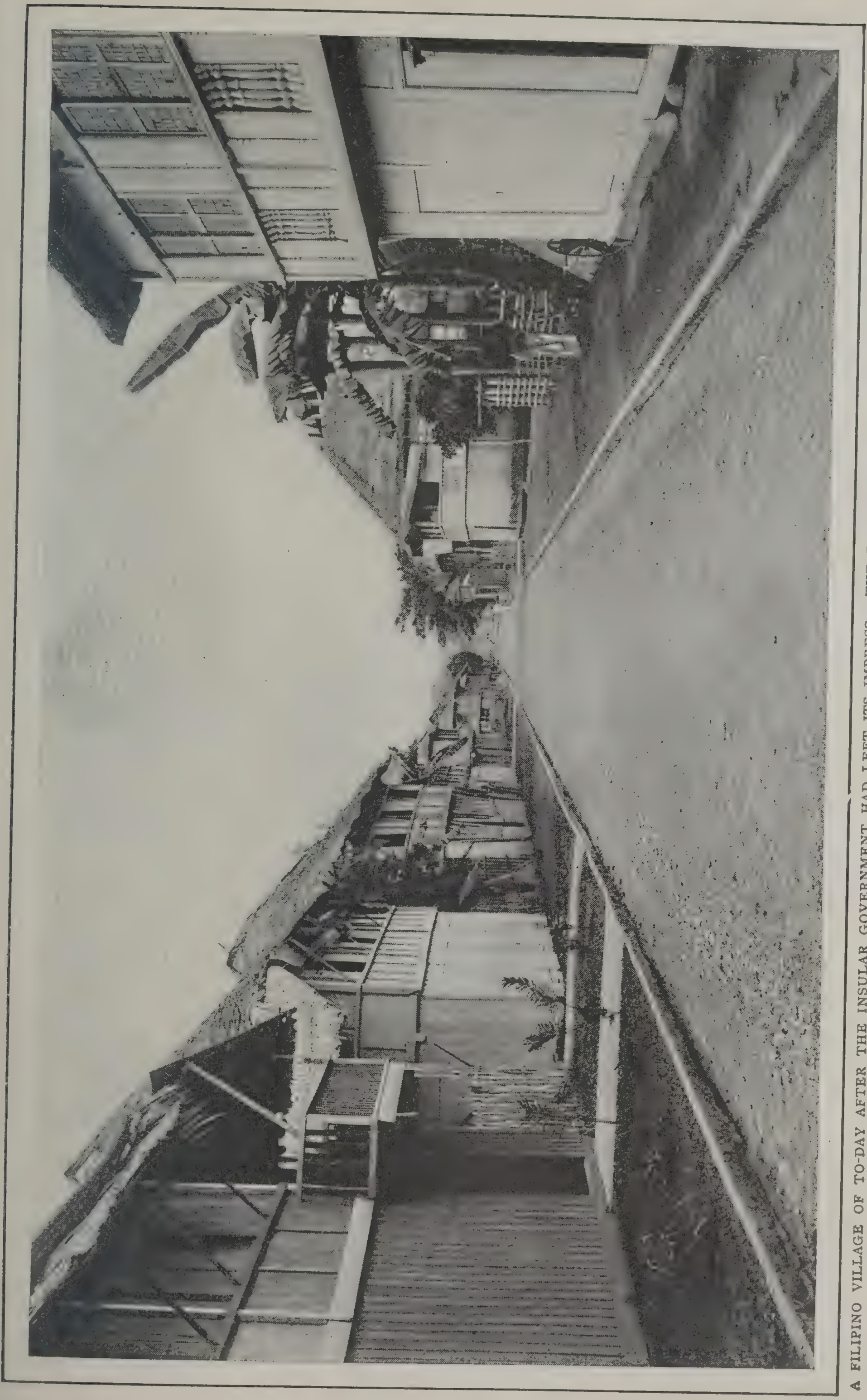
AN EXAMPLE OF THE PROGRESS ALREADY MADE. THIS BUKIDNON, THOUGH UNABLE TO READ OR WRITE, HAS BECOME AN EXPERT ROAD AND BRIDGE ENGINEER

The government has successfully used its powerful influence in favor of the general planting of coconuts and corn. The former give good returns with little care, and the Philippines have now become the leading coconut-growing country of the world. Corn is a much better food than is rice, and it often makes a crop when the rice crop fails.

Agricultural methods and machinery were nothing short of primitive. Modern machinery has gradually been introduced and improved methods of cultivation are slowly replacing those which have prevailed for centuries.

The islands have 40,000 square miles of virgin forests containing one of the most valuable remaining stands of hardwoods. In the past they have been ruthlessly slaughtered. We have established a conservation policy which, if adhered to, will protect them as a permanent source of great wealth while permitting and encouraging the development of an immense industry in lumber and fine cabinet woods.

The Philippines are capable of producing



A FILIPINO VILLAGE OF TO-DAY AFTER THE INSULAR GOVERNMENT HAD LEFT ITS IMPRESS. THE DEATH RATE AMONG FILIPINOS IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE HAS BEEN CUT BY SANITARY PRECAUTIONS TO 4 PER 1,000 the kinds and amounts of tropical products imported into the United States, as well as beautiful laces and embroideries. We now pay out annually some $750,000,000 for such products. The balance of trade with the countries which furnish them is against us to the tune of $360,000,000.

Furthermore, we sell these countries little but raw materials on which we make our smallest profit. On the other hand, the Philippines buy from us practically dollar for dollar as much as we buy from them, taking our manufactured goods on which we make our largest profit.

TWO FAIR AND TYPICAL FILIPINO WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS IN NATIVE COSTUME

Is it not obviously the part of common sense to encourage increased agricultural production in our newest possession and to develop trade between that country and the United States? This, at all events, has been the view of the American insular officials, who have done all they could to encourage the legitimate investment of American capital in the islands.

The usual daily wage of the Filipino has increased from ten cents, which was the rule when I visited the islands in Spanish days, to twenty-five or fifty cents, depending on the province in which the work is performed. Hemp strippers are often paid a dollar or more.

The annual exports of the country have increased in value from $23,222,348 in 1901 to $53,683,321 in 1913, and its imports from $30,276,200 to $56,327,533.

If the Filipino farmer is to become prosperous, he must own his land. We have given him all possible help in acquiring title to it. The law relative to homesteading, leasing, and purchasing public land is very liberal to the would-be small owner, but it has proved most difficult to convey to him knowledge of his rights. We have utilized every means that ingenuity could suggest, including circulars in English, Spanish, and the native dialects, and announcements by provincial and municipal officials and by teachers in the public schools. The latter have instructed pupils to inform their parents.

Our efforts to generalize this information have been quietly opposed by many wealthy Filipino owners of large tracts of land, who desired to hold their poor neighbors as peon laborers.

An act for the purpose of reducing the cost of land surveys to the common people was refused passage for years by the Philippine Assembly, but has finally become a law.

In overcoming the opposition of wealthy Filipinos to the acquisition of land by the

FIGHTING THE DEADLY MOSQUITO IN HIS HAUNTS AROUND MANILA. SPRAYING OIL TO KILL THIS PEST

poor, and in protecting the public domain against the false claims of the rich, frequently put forward for the sole purpose of keeping the land from falling into the hands of small farmers who would cultivate it, we have been forced to use public-land inspectors, who went from house to house verbally instructing the inhabitants as to their rights, helping them to fill out necessary legal forms, and advising the director of lands if they were being imposed upon.

A LITTLE WATER-CARRIER. HER HOLLOW BAMBOO IS THE USUAL FILIPINO PAIL

Of the 8,000,000 inhabitants of the Philippines approximately 1,070,000 are members of non-Christian tribes, many of which have until recently been fierce and warlike. We have established the friendliest relations with all of these people save a few Moros and two or three numerically unimportant tribes in very remote regions.

We have built roads and trails through much of the wild men's country, making it easier to control them and facilitating the marketing of their products.

We have checked head-hunting, murder, slave-taking, robbery, and theft among them, and have made life and property safe throughout regions where life was formerly cheap indeed and property was apt to find its way into the hands of the men strong and brave enough to seize it and hold it.

In establishing and maintaining law and order we have largely used the wild men to police their own country. Many of their formerly filthy villages have been made sanitary, and huts in the tree-tops have been replaced by comfortable houses in well-ordered towns.

We have helped these wards of the nation to secure more irrigation works and in other ways have made food more abundant and cheaper in their country, thus meeting the need arising from the rapid increase in population which followed the checking of head-hunting and murder.

By effective legislation, strictly enforced, we have saved them from the threatened curse of alcoholism. We have protected them from cholera and bubonic plague and immunized them against smallpox. We have cured thousands who were ill with malaria, yaws, or other serious ailments.

We are teaching their children English and are instructing them in useful trades and industries.

In short, we have set the feet of these backward peoples firmly on

A TYPICAL WOMAN OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

FILIPINO BOYS TAKE KINDLY TO MANUAL TRAINING. HERE A GROUP IS SHOWN LEARNING CABINET-MAKING AT ONE OF THE MANY TRADE-SCHOOLS

ONE OF THE MAGNIFICENT CONCRETE BUILDINGS OF THE GOVERNMENT UNIVERSITY AT MANILA. THERE ARE COLLEGES OF LIBERAL ARTS, VETERINARY SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, MEDICINE AND SURGERY, LAW AND AGRICULTURE, AND FINE ARTS. PHARMACY IS TAUGHT IN THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND FORESTRY IN THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

the road that leads onward and upward, and they are showing an unanticipated willingness and ability to travel it.

We have done all of these things practically without bloodshed save in the Moro country. The hillmen of northern Luzon do not differ essentially from those in Formosa, whom Japan has failed to control and has for years been seeking to exterminate. Is not our way the better way?

In this brief review of the results of our Philippine stewardship I have omitted all mention of many important matters, such as the establishment of freedom of speech and of the press; the placing of the currency on a gold basis; the creation of an efficient civil service, based strictly on merit, in which the political views of appointees have heretofore played no part; the training of Filipinos as public officers, and the rapidly increasing share given them in governmental work and affairs.

Never before in the history of the world has a powerful nation assumed toward a weaker one quite such an attitude as we have adopted toward the Filipinos, and we have just cause to be proud of the practical results of our Philippine stewardship.

THE HARDEST THING

Dear God, 'tis hard to love him still
  And know him false—unworthy me,
To feel his life I may not fill,
  Though yield I all I hoped to be.

My heart—the dust beneath his feet,
  'Tis hard to love him—soul-sick, sore,
And yet the thing I cannot meet
  Is *not* to love him any more!

Wanda May

THE WEDDING BOB DEAN RAN

BY EDWARD BOLTWOOD

ILLUSTRATED BY W. HERBERT DUNTON

BEDELIA CITY first had wind that something queer was happening at Bob Dean's when Bob was seen to stop at the new minister's house and drive away with the Rev. Mr. Hamlin seated in the ranch-buggy beside him. The amazing spectacle caused the front legs of three chairs, tilted against Beebe's Elite Palace Hotel and Livery-Stable, to descend with a single thud.

"Dean, he was plumb sober a half-hour ago!" exclaimed Beebe, staring wildly.

"Mebbe that sunstroke Bob had last year," said Conk Hoover, "is just takin' a holt."

T. K. O'Hara, the renegade attorney from Los Angeles, feebly rubbed his incredulous eyes.

"Three witnesses," he declared, "ain't compe-torial to substantialize no such evidence as what we're seein'."

The buggy disappeared in the dust of the road which led to Bob Dean's sheep-ranch. Little Mr. Hamlin, breathing through a prim handkerchief, glanced perplexedly at stalwart Mr. Dean. The clergyman had never met Bob before, and he had no clearer notion of the purpose of his journey than had the trio at the livery-stable. Bob Dean, in the words of T. K. O'Hara, was always about as talkative as a ton of coal.

Arrived at the ranch-house, Bob tossed the reins to a Chinaman, and dismounted.

"Walk in," said he.

The visitor obeyed, after shaking the dust from his black coat. He was glad that he had done this when he perceived that a lady was in the living-room, evidently arrayed for an occasion. She was older than Bob Dean, and her pudgy face exhibited the indecisive character of a dumpling.

"Sister," presented Mr. Dean. "Lulu—Reverend Hamlin. Set down."

"Happy to meet your sister, sir," murmured the parson.

"Not whole," Bob elucidated. "Half-sister. Same dad—two maws. How's trade?"

"Trade?" echoed Mr. Hamlin blankly.

"Yes," said Bob. "Are you overly busy? 'Cause if you ain't, I got a job for you."

The lady tittered, rocking violently and pretending to hide her blushes behind a coquettish muslin apron.

"Why, Bob!" she gurgled. "You go on like everything was fixed regular."

"So it is," said her brother.

"Don't you believe him, Mr. Hamlin! I ain't nearly made up my mind yet. There's times I feel as if I had, and there's times I feel as if I hadn't."

"It's fixed," asserted Bob Dean.

Little Mr. Hamlin timidly contemplated the ranchman's lean countenance, and was inclined to agree with the assertion, whatever might be its ulterior significance.

"You mentioned some desire for my assistance, Mr. Dean," he said. "My—ah—services are always at the disposal of any members of this—ah—community, regardless of religious predilections."

Bob's square jaw dropped helplessly.

"Well, 'services'—I sense you on that, anyhow. Services is what we want. Weddin' services. Lulu's goin' to be wed up to Alvin F. Jelfer, o' Fayburg."

"And we ain't had a squint of him in our born days," chuckled Lulu behind the apron.

The clergyman looked grave.

"Shucks! Wait till I tell you," said Dean. "You smoke? No, course not. Well!" He bit a cigar viciously, and pro-

A VERY ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN DESCENDED FROM THE STAGE, ALTHOUGH SHE LOOKED MORE LIKE A HANDSOME BOY THAN A GIRL ceeded to explain. "A ranch is no place for she folks," went on Bob. "In the way, see-sawin' 'round. No snap to 'em, no get-up-and-get-there-Eli. Lulu, she's all right, far's she goes, but she needs a man every two minutes or so to make up her mind for her. Needs a husband. Well, I cal'lated, a spell back, on Alec Beebe. Nothin' doin'. Beebe couldn't make up his own mind, let alone Lulu's. Then Conk Hoover. Conk reneged. He ain't got the spinal column of a smelt. Now, backbone is what hits *me*. Quick stuff, savvy? Yes or no, like that."

He snapped his big fingers. The little parson nodded nervously, while Bob pulled a bundle of documents from a drawer in the table and banged it on the clerical knee.

"So here we got it," he said.

"Got what?" asked the startled Mr. Hamlin.

"Ad in the *Wreath of Hymen,"* explained Dean. "Answer from Alvin F. Jelfer, of Fayburg. Letters wrote, photos swapped. All O. K., be here to-morrow. Ever hear o' the *Wreath of Hymen?* Fool name, but a fine paper. Three dollars a year and worth it."

The clergyman scanned the matrimonial journal, with its columns of advertisements of those seeking affinities. Bob Dean puffed his cigar; his sister put the muslin apron again into commission; and Mr. Hamlin presently unfolded a typewritten letter, reading as follows:

ALVIN F. JELFER

REAL ESTATE AND INSURANCE

MISS LULU DEAN,
DEAR MADAM:

Replying yrs, 21st inst., would say (1) 49 next March 6th (2) brownish (3) $4300 (4) blue, slight cast (5) no (6) immediately on arrival (7) yes. Early answer will oblige, yrs, etc.

"How's that?" exulted Bob. "There's a man, I tell you, that's got a mind of his own. Answers up quick and sharp, just the way I had Lulu put them questions to him. Lulu wrote the letters. I told what to say. If I'd left it to her—shucks, her palaver would 'a' stampeded a business feller like Alvin F! All his letters was like that, so was hern. You be ready to make the hitch to-morrow? I'll hire Masonic Hall, over the barber-shop."

"To-morrow?" repeated the minister.

"That's what No. 6 means there on the invoice," said Bob Dean. "Immediate on arrival. To-morrow, or next day. Fayburg ain't so mighty far up the river."

The Rev. Mr. Hamlin arose in a sort of daze and shook hands with the hesitant and coyish Lulu.

"I dunno," she wavered. "I dunno as I—"

"So-long, parson," broke in Bob Dean firmly. "The Chinaman'll drive you back. Women are no good on a sheep-ranch, and when I say I'm goin' to run a weddin' you can bet your best shirt it's time to tune up the choir!"

II

THE minister had a communicative wife, and the next morning, consequently, in front of the Palace Hotel, Bedelia City joyously awaited the arrival of the bridegroom from Fayburg.

"This here eruption of Dean's," said T. K. O'Hara, "into an affair of connubial bliss, is a sure enough cur'us event. Bob knows as much about females as a Hottentot does about ice. They are cert'nly an unknown quantity to him."

Cross-examined, Bob Dean was, as usual, stonily silent. With a cold and impersonal scrutiny he watched the approach of the stage and the emergence therefrom of a loosely built stranger wearing a linen duster and a vacant smile.

Conk Hoover started a cheer, but repressed it when Bob stalked through the crowd and grabbed the traveler's carpetbag.

"Your name Alvin F. Jelfer?"

"Why, sir, I 'most guess I can say 'tis, and then again, maybe 'tain't."

"Mine's Dean," announced Bob.

"Well, well, well!" cackled Mr. Jelfer shrilly. "Relative, I kind o' reckon, p'rhaps?"

"Brother," said Bob Dean. "Not whole—half. Same dad, two maws. You come into the hotel and pick out a room."

There are only seven bedchambers in the Palace, and it did not take long for Alec Beebe, the proprietor, at the desk, to indicate to Mr. Jelfer the field of choice. Bob Dean stood by among the observant citizens in the office.

"Hum!" considered Jelfer, stroking a pendulous lip. "I don't always seem to like a south room 'xactly—oh, southeast, you say? Well, there's the sun in the mornin', and — I dunno — once I had a north room in Ogden, and 'twarn't so good, real good, that is. Maybe it was in Salt Lake—I disremember. West room? Prob-'ly I might take that one, and yet—what do you think, Mr. Dean? Was you ever in Ogden?"

"What the— What odds does that make?" demanded Bob. "Here, Beebe, you show him 'round."

The proprietor bore the carpetbag upstairs, and the bridegroom in the linen duster fluttered uncertainly at his heels. From the floor above Jelfer's plaintive voice was heard continuously as he perambulated the hotel; and after a quarter of an hour or so Beebe came down with a red face.

"Took the bunk I showed him first, after all," growled Beebe. "I never did see such a locoed old maverick."

"Landlord!" piped Jelfer from the staircase. "I reckon this next room, come to think of it — I dunno — p'rhaps I'd rather—"

Beebe reascended, a trifle profanely; Bob Dean, surveying the crowd, thrust his hands very deep in his trouser-pockets; and Abie Engstein, who was the janitor of Masonic Hall, cleared his throat.

"Want I should fix up the place for this evenin', Bob?" he hinted diffidently.

"Sure!" thundered Dean. "You fix up, and keep fixed up! This weddin' goes. Letters is letters, ain't they? Although," he added, "how that seesawin' jellyfish come to write so like a reg'lar man beats me complete."

The hotel clock struck the hour of noon, and Bob Dean strode to the foot of the stairs.

"Jelfer!" he called. "We'll start for the ranch. You be ready in five minutes?"

"Well, yes *and* no, Mr. Dean," quavered the invisible bridegroom. "Three minutes, maybe—or maybe ten—or maybe—"

"Five's what I said!" yelled Bob, and he performed an elementary war-dance.

The spectacle of his rage was painful, and we retired to the barroom of the Palace. Wagering began briskly on the likelihood of the wedding ceremony. One party banked on Bob's stubbornness; the other on the fact that, being a woman-hater, he was disqualified from forwarding matrimony.

"And he never can bring that flighty Fayburg moth-miller up to the scratch, nohow," said Conk Hoover, laying his ninth bet.

Toward the middle of the afternoon the decision of the official stakeholder behind the bar was postponed by the arrival of Bob Dean's Chinaman with an oral message for Mr. Engstein.

"Boss says weddy not to-light," jabbered the Chinaman. "Keep hall fixed all same. Weddy to-mollow days."

III

No nuptials, however, gratified Bedelia City on the morrow, nor, for that matter, on the day following; and Hoover and his adherents were jubilant.

Bob Dean, defiant of propriety, had established his prospective brother-in-law, carpetbag and all, in the ranch-house. Scouts returned from the ranch to the hotel with meager information.

"Dean and him and Lulu was roostin' on the veranda this mornin'," reported Alec Beebe to the citizens at the Palace. "I stayed long as I could. Bob was tryin' to get him to settle whether they'd be married with one ring or two rings. 'Twarn't no use. Dean's pale and ga'nted, as if he had been herdin' sheep in a blizzard. Hullo, yonder's the stage! Who's the gal?"

She was a very attractive young woman indeed who descended from the Fayburg stage that noon in front of the hotel, although, with her aggressive chin and straight shoulders, she looked more like a handsome boy than a girl. She wore a serviceable sombrero and a close-fitting khaki dress which made you think of a uniform.

"Morning!" she said briskly. "Alvin F. Jelfer here?"

O'Hara spoke up at once; he alleged afterward that his professional instinct immediately scented a scandal.

"Yes, ma'am," responded T. K. "Leastwise he's on a ranch two miles over that divide, Mrs.—Mrs.—"

"Miss," snapped the girl. "Kate Stark. Hook up a rig for me, anybody?"

"Sure thing," agreed Beebe with a jump.

Miss Stark gazed across the street at the windows of Masonic Hall, wherein Abie Engstein had tastefully arranged hymeneal festoons of white cheese-cloth.

"Been a wedding?" she asked.

"Going to be," said T. K. O'Hara.

"P'r'aps," drawled Hoover.

The young lady impaled Conk with a glance like the punch of a chisel.

"If you want to bet there isn't," she said, "just you let me know, my friend. Here's my card."

"'Jelfer & Stark,'" read Conk. "'Jelfer & Stark, real-estate and insurance.' Why, dog my cats! You must be his partner!"

"And niece," added the girl. "Now, then, where's the rig? Oh, all right, give me the whip. Bob Dean's ranch, did you say? Never heard of him. Is he father to that snappy-writing Lulu?"

"Half-brother," fluttered O'Hara weakly. "Not whole. Same dad, two—"

"Get up!" cried Miss Stark to Beebe's horse, and she whirled down the road toward the sheep-ranch.

"Well, by jiminetty!" gasped Conk Hoover, fingering the laundry slip which contained his list of bets. "I'm a goin' to hedge, if I can. Yes, sir-ee! I'm a goin' to hedge before evenin'."

The hours moved slowly. Bedelia City suspended its afternoon business and frankly devoted itself to waiting; even the Rev. Mr. Hamlin dallied at the door of the Palace barroom for news. There was no news whatever. Industrious watchers, surreptitiously patrolling the road in front of Bob's place, saw nothing of the matchmakers or the happy pair.

At eight o'clock Abie Engstein lighted the kerosene lamps in Masonic Hall.

"Ain't been told not to, anyhow," he said. "Might as well be ready. Walk up, folks! And—look out there! What'd I tell you? Here's the parson! Gangway!"

It was, indeed, Mr. Hamlin, in official garb, who squirmed excitedly through the assembled spectators.

"The Chinaman just called at my house," he declared to Conk. "The couple have left the ranch."

He mounted the platform. Abie's daughter sat down at the melodeon and the citizens decorously arranged themselves against the walls. Hurried footsteps were heard on the stairs. The melodeon wheezed forth the "Washington Post." And Bob Dean, with Miss Stark upon his arm, marched rapidly to the platform and confronted the clergyman.

"Go ahead," he ordered. "Make it short."

"You and — and this — this lady?" blurted Mr. Hamlin, aghast.

"Us," said Bob.

IV

When it was over the bridegroom explained proudly. He seemed very proud and happy, and so did his wife.

"Why, we've knowed each other for more'n a month, 'count o' them letters she and I wrote," said Bob Dean. "That is, we was stuck on each other's way of doin' things, although up to six hours ago she thought I was Lulu and I thought she was Alvin F. But, at that, six hours is a heap o' time to them that don't seesaw. Al and Lu? Oh, they'll live with us, I judge. We didn't get shet of them, after all, but we've got each other. How's that, Kate?"

"Right," said Mrs. Bob.

BACK FROM PANAMA

Shrinking with awe from prehistoric days—
  A time when earth was racked from crust to core
  And life gigantic swarmed air, sea, and shore—
Shrinking from such, we turn in praise
To dwell on wonders like the Cretan maze,
  Vast Babylon, whose gardens seemed to soar,
  Colossus—proud above a harbor's roar—
And China's wall, which armies could not raze.

Yet look about us! Towers of dreadful height
  Storm the blue vault; huge shapes with jaws of steel
  Crunch rock; winged gossamer assails the sun;
Rumbling below, sweeps labyrinthine night.
  No praise? No awe? Has man lost power to feel,
  Short of past marvels or two seas made one?

Richard Butler Glaenzer

THE COLOSSAL GROWTH OF THE SAVINGS-BANK

STARTING IN THE SMALLEST WAY IN SCOTLAND A CENTURY AGO THE IDEA HAS CIRCLED THE GLOBE

BY ISAAC F. MARCOSSON

A LITTLE over a century ago a parson named Henry Duncan presided over the Scotch parish of Ruthwell. He had been trained for trade and had literally stepped from the counting-room into the pulpit. About him was waged a grim and uncompromising struggle for bare existence. The poor-laws and the inability of the people to put by any surplus kept the community impoverished.

"We must teach these people to save," he one day said to his friend, Dr. Chalmers, an eminent Scot.

But how to do this was the problem. There was no organized agency for encouraging thrift; no machinery for conserving money that reached the mass of the population. The modest savings that sacrifice dragged from daily needs were always accessible and went at the first pinch of need or at the first impulse. Duncan felt that if one confined himself to the relief of poverty he did little but encourage it. The task, therefore, was to dry up its springs.

He realized that the first step toward systematic saving was to provide a secure and somewhat inaccessible place for the deposit of savings. In this inspiration lay the whole crux of the savings-bank movement.

"Why not get some receptacle and make these people put their surplus in it?" he asked. "Then they will not be in such a hurry to take it out."

Here at least was a plan to place the money out of immediate reach of temptation.

So the parson installed an iron box in his cottage and went forth to preach the gospel of saving and, what was equally important, the safeguarding of what was saved. Strange as it may seem, the idea was at first rejected in a canny Scotch district. The shrewd parishioners did not question the efficacy of the savings proposition, but they had doubts about the security of the impromptu bank.

To overcome this, Duncan had three locks made for the box. He distributed the keys among three men. Thus the coffer could not be opened save in the presence of the trio.

That iron box, set up in an obscure Scotch cottage, was the first real savings-bank, the crude corner-stone of a movement that has become a vast agency for progress. From it has grown a world-wide bulwark of the people's money.

Dr. Duncan was not the first to agitate the systematic savings plan, although he was probably the pioneer in establishing a rude sort of bank. The Germans, always prudent, had tried to put the same idea into effect toward the end of the eighteenth century by setting up an institution in Hamburg for the encouragement of thrift among seamen, servants, and day laborers. In France, old-time sanctuary of economy, had been advocated a similar plan.

Some of Duncan's English contemporaries almost stole a march on him by starting so-called "frugality banks," which were humble forerunners of cooperative institutions. It is interesting to note that in most of the early Anglo-Saxon savings projects the church had large influence. Later the state supplanted this domination. To England's credit let it be said that she first gave the savings-bank statutory recognition and regulation.

Whatever its exact origin, the fact remains that the savings-bank idea, once started, developed rapidly. To-day the sun never sets on its activity, for in every part of the world there is some definite organized medium for promoting thrift and conserving its fruit. The story of the savings-bank is one of the really inspiring chapters in human progress.

The average person does not often realize the actual enormous extent of this structure reared on the nickels, the pennies, the centimes, or the pfennigs of the people. There is no pomp or glamour of spectacular *coup* about it; none of the thrill of financial empire-making. Yet these citadels of saving are among the impregnable buttresses of world-money.

The growth of the savings-bank in the United States has been marvelous. But before we go into the big and striking facts let us first see, briefly, just what the structure of the institution is.

VARIATIONS IN THE MACHINERY

The savings-bank began in this country as a sort of philanthropic trust, founded with no idea of profit for stockholders (for there were none), but managed by trustees, whose sole purpose was to encourage the habit of saving and to provide a special security for the deposits. This is the mutual bank.

Hence it came about that the state took a hand in the regulation of the savings-bank and framed laws providing for a special supervision of its business and a definite restriction on its investments. Most of the mutual banks are in the New England and Eastern States, where the idea first took root in the United States.

Then there is the stock savings-bank, which is like any other commercial bank in that it has stockholders and conducts business with the idea of also making dividends for them. The majority of these banks are in the Western and Southern States.

The savings-bank laws vary. In some States, notably in those commonwealths where the movement began in this country, they are most drastic. The most rigid are in Massachusetts and in New York, where the legal investments for the institutions provide an admirable guide for the small investor who wants to be extremely conservative. In New York, for example, the savings-banks are limited to only three kinds of investment in the employment of their funds — government bonds and the bonds of cities, towns, counties, and States, real-estate mortgages, and railroad bonds of the very highest type. Some States have no savings-bank laws at all.

THE MILITANT MARCH OF THRIFT

Now let us see what the nickels and the dimes of the steady savers have done in the United States. It is the record of the militant march of thrift registered in terms of billions. The bald statistics stand out with impressive force.

In 1820 we had ten savings-banks, with 8,635 depositors, whose savings aggregated $1,138,000. There was an average deposit of $131.86.

To-day we have 1,978 savings-banks, including both mutual and stock banks, with 10,766,936 depositors, whose savings pile up the tremendous total of $4,727,403,950. The average deposit is $439.07. If this money were distributed among all the people of the country it would mean $48.56 for each of the 95,656,000 men, women, and children in the United States.

Take these figures and make some comparisons and you begin to have a bigger respect for the savings-bank idea and for the legions behind it. The more than ten million depositors form a host greater than the entire fighting strength of the armies of Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. They would populate the city of New York twice over; they represent a multitude equal to the combined population of Alabama, California, Indiana, and Massachusetts, and that is more people than resided in the whole United States in 1820, the first year of definite organization of the savings-bank movement in this country.

Their hoard of more than four and a half billion dollars is four times the bonded debt of the United States; it is equal to one-fourth of all the deposits of the national and State banks; it is nearly twice the total traffic revenue of all the American railroads. At every turn you find some amazing evidence of the magnitude and power of the savings-banks.

What might be called the geography of the savings-bank presents some striking features. For example, the mutual banks are considerably outnumbered by the stock savings-banks — the figures, respectively, are 623 and 1,355—yet they have about eighty per cent of the depositors and contain three-fourths of all the deposits.

New York State alone has over three million depositors, more people than reside in Indiana, and their deposits have passed the billion-and-a-half mark. Massachusetts, that very pillar of our thrift, does still better, in proportion to its population. It has more than two million savings-bank depositors, with eight hundred and twenty-four millions of deposits.

Since the bulk of our savings is in the East, it follows that the largest banks are there. The great New York savings-banks are veritable Gibraltars of steel and granite. In deposits they rival their commercial contemporaries. The biggest of all of them has more than $128,000,000 on its pass-books. Another long ago passed the hundred million mark, and several are well on the way to this tremendous goal.

These banks touch all classes. I know of one that, by reason of its cosmopolitan clientele, is compelled to print its instructions and its books in six different languages. There was a time when the American savings-banks of the most conservative type (the old-line mutual kind) did not even advertise. Now they not only solicit patronage, but do a banking business by mail.

HOSTS OF EUROPEAN SAVERS

This estimate of our savings-banks must include a hasty survey of their neighbors abroad. Germany leads the world with her host of savers, for there are 22,349,000 depositors enrolled on the books of her public and corporate savings-banks. This means that one out of every three persons that you meet in the German empire has a savings-bank account. Yet the total deposits of these depositors is half a billion dollars less than ours, being only $4,241,560,762. The average deposit per inhabitant is $65.83 and per depositor, $189.78.

The United Kingdom has 1,870,510 depositors, with total deposits of $261,875,606 and an average deposit of only $5.73.

In France you find an interesting situation. Here is a country with a population less than half of ours, and yet she has three million more depositors than we have. One striking fact about the French saver is that out of the total of about thirteen and a half million savings accounts in the republic more than four millions, or nearly one-third, are for twenty francs or less. The French are born investors. As soon as they get enough money in a savings-bank to buy a government bond or a first-class real-estate mortgage (both of these investments may be had in very small denominations) they put their money into one and thus increase their income.

The net result of any comparison between our savings-banks and those of foreign countries shows that while we show a minority in numbers, as compared with some countries, the average individual deposit over here is four times greater than that of any other land.

There are many big employers who hire those applicants who can produce a savings-bank pass-book. That the savings-bank idea is penetrating the consciousness of our people is shown by the encouraging fact that despite the terrific tax made on their resources by the advanced cost of living, the army of savers in the banks has increased by 756,632—a 7.5 per cent gain —during the last twelve months.

THE POST-OFFICE ADJUNCT

As in most foreign lands where saving is a tradition, various first aids to the savings-banks have cropped up in the United States. Foremost among them is the introduction of the postal-savings system. The regular savings-bank officials warmly encouraged and commended this plan from the start. Instead of regarding it as a competitor they wisely saw that it was merely a feeder to them.

First of all it is helping to keep within our own confines the money saved by foreigners which went back to their own countries because there they could get the government stamp on their savings.

Here are some significant figures from the report of the New York postmaster to June 30, 1913: Of the 30,138 depositors on that date thirty-six per cent were native whites, while 61.7 per cent were foreign-born whites.

Second, it helps to encourage the thrift idea.

Third, the bankers realized that the average man or woman will not be content with the two per cent paid by the government on postal savings when he or she can get three or four per cent from a savings-bank. Many postal savers are transferring their accounts to the banks as soon as they have a little "nest-egg."

The growth of the postal-savings banks has been little short of marvelous. Established in January, 1911, with forty-eight depositories, these banks have shown steady gains every month since that time. From $60,101 at the end of the first month the deposits have risen to $33,818,870, the June, 1913, figures, which have just been tabulated. For thirteen months out of the thirty that the banks had been in operation up to that time, the deposits increased at the rate of a million dollars or more a month. For each of three months the increase in amounts locked up in this way was more than two million dollars.

The latest figures give the number of depositors as 330,703, an increase of 28,546 in half a year, and put the average deposit at $102, an increase of $10 over the average deposit six months before, which itself had been increased by $10 over the preceding half-year. In June, 1911, six months after the banks were opened, the average deposit was $56.82. Already, in two years, it has almost doubled.

From the original forty-eight the number of depositories has grown to 12,820, including 662 branches.

Every indication points to sustained growth for the postal-savings banks. It will be long, however, before they reach the status of those long established in Europe. In France, which has 5,542,000 depositors, the deposits amount to $316,456,000, but the average deposit is only $89.36. In Austria, which has 2,238,000 depositors, with deposits of $118,461,000, the average deposit is $52.93. In the Netherlands, with 1,510,000 depositors and $64,436,000 deposits, the average deposit is $42.67.

Such an admirable innovation as savings-bank insurance, which enables the wage-earner to get all the benefits of protection for his family in case of his death during the life of his savings account, is just another type of the inducements now held out to the average American to join the host of the thrifty.

The lesson of thrift that the growth of the savings-bank deposits teaches is the real stimulus to personal betterment. Nothing so advances a people in permanent prosperity as the solid accumulations of savings. They form the huge and unshakable reservoirs of capital which are immune against the inroads of panic and the shifting hazards of trade.

The wise man saves.

THE SUNKEN SPANIARD

The fight was over, the battle done
Before the setting of the sun,
And many a ship, as I well know,
Made her bed on the sands below.
And some that saw the stars at night
Had made their bed before the light.

The barnacles creep their ribs between,
And their sides are mossed with the seaweed green,
And the jewels drop from the rusted swords
In the skeleton hands of the sleeping lords.

The deep-sea fishes have nested in
The silken banner of Catherine.
The leaden feet of the centuries
Make spoil of the colored broideries.

Out of the deep came splendor and moan,
And the sea hath taken again her own.
Sorrow and splendor came from the sea
With the pearls sewn into the broidery.
And the wave that washes the seaward whin,
Rolls over the lost Saint Catherine.

Ethel Talbot Scheffauer

A CAMEL AT A BARGAIN

BY S. E. KISER

ILLUSTRATED BY MODEST STEIN

THERE was one thing I had always had clearly fixed in my mind. This was that I would never marry a girl who was foolishly fond of dogs or cats. I had once been almost madly in love with Julia Thrall, but one day when she and I were strolling under arching elms and indulging in romantic fancies such as are likely to come to people in the dreamy days of early autumn she suddenly swooped down upon a portly pup, clutched him to her breast, and kissed his clammy nose. I felt thankful then that I had never had the courage to ask Julia's father to yield his child to me.

Fortunately Evelyn had no absurd notions concerning pets. She was willing to admit that dogs might be useful, if they were kept in their proper places, and her opinion of cats was exactly in line with my own. So we were married, and I hoped we were going to live happily ever after; but I discovered before long that Evelyn was the possessor of a peculiar propensity. Perhaps it was not peculiar either. Since it has become possible for me to study women impassionately I have observed that many of them exhibit propensities which, if they are not identical with that possessed by Evelyn, are similar to it.

Evelyn's propensity was brought to my notice for the first time when she met me at the door one evening and confessed that she had bought a perfectly splendid pair of riding-breeches for me.

I informed her as gently as I could that inasmuch as I did not own a horse, had no idea of buying one, and had never learned to ride, I could not quite understand what I was to do with my riding-breeches. It did not seem to me that they could well be utilized in adding to the ornamentation of our bungalow, and I was sure that I should not permit myself to be persuaded to wear them to the office. Riding-breeches may be, and doubtless are, all right when one is riding, but I have never seen a man who looked well in them while he was standing on his feet or walking for his health. I admitted as much to Evelyn.

" But they were such a bargain, dear," she said with enthusiasm that had not in any sense been chilled by my lack of appreciation. " Do you know what the original price of them was? Sixteen dollars! And they were marked down to four fifty."

If they had been marked down to twenty-seven cents they would not have been worth that price to me, but I didn't have the heart to say so to Evelyn, she was so happy over her wonderful bargain. One evening, when she was in bed with a headache, I stealthily took my riding-breeches out and dropped them into an unoccupied automobile that stood in front of a church. Evelyn continues to believe there was something weird and unnatural about their disappearance.

A few months after our marriage it became necessary for me to take a business trip through the far West, and Evelyn insisted on accompanying me.

" We have never really had a wedding trip, you know," she argued, " and this will be such a fine chance to have one at the company's expense."

I tried to convince her that it would hardly be fair to the company to take a wedding trip at its expense, but she was unable to understand my logic. She leaned over the back of my chair, slipped her arms around my neck, and said:

" I sha'n't interfere with your business engagements at all, and you won't have to write to me, you know, so you see you will have that much extra time to devote to the company's affairs. In that way you will more than make up for my expenses."

It was useless to insist that there was a matter of ethics involved, for women do not, as a rule, appear to be able to consider ethics from the business side.

While we were in California Evelyn almost snapped up what would have been a record-breaker in the way of bargains. Out upon the edge of the desert somebody had erected a big hotel for the accommodation of nervous people who desired to escape from the noise and confusion of cities. It was intended also to be a haven for those who wished to meditate in silence and to elude agents, promoters, and the wearisome conversation of baseball enthusiasts.

It appeared, however, that the supply of people who were looking for a haven of that kind was so limited as seriously to interfere with the success of the enterprise. The hotel had been vacant for a year and the owner was reported to be anxious to dispose of it at a sacrifice. We had seen the building from a car-window and one of our fellow passengers had informed us of the purpose of the man who had projected it.

Evelyn took a lively interest in the story and thought it a great pity that such a splendid building should be permitted to go to waste.

One evening, when I arrived at our hotel after a hard day with obdurate people who had refused to believe that there was any immediate necessity for replenishing their stocks of goods, I was informed by my wife that she had a splendid surprise for me. I needed a splendid surprise to cheer me up, and I begged her to let me hear her good news.

" Do you remember that beautiful building we saw out on the desert the other day?" she asked.

" Yes," I replied; " but what about your surprise?"

" That's it!" she exclaimed. " I have found the man who owns it, and he is willing to sell it for less than half the cost of the bare walls."

" That doesn't surprise me," I assured her. " I should think he would be glad to give it away."

" Think what a splendid thing it would be," she said, " to own a hotel where we could entertain our friends. It would be the jolliest kind of a place for house-parties."

" Yes," I replied. " I suppose our friends would be delighted to run out from the East almost any Friday or Saturday afternoon to stay over Sunday."

" I don't believe," Evelyn complained, " that you realize what a bargain this is. We could buy the whole thing for a few hundred dollars; and think of the thousands it cost originally."

When we ended our discussion she was weeping and convinced that I was wholly incapable of appreciating a bargain when one was placed within my reach. I am glad to be able to say that we did not purchase the hotel and that the owner of it was manly enough to return to Evelyn ten dollars which she had deposited with him for the purpose of securing an option on the property.

In Colorado, where we stopped on our way home, Evelyn heard of an abandoned stamp-mill that was offered "dirt cheap," and she suggested that we ought to buy it before somebody else took advantage of the bargain. When I inquired what use we would have for a stamp-mill, she said:

"We could make our own stamps, you know, and perhaps our friends would be willing to buy their supplies from us."

We did not buy the stamp-mill, but during the first two or three years of our married life Evelyn picked up a number of bargains whereby we became the sole proprietors of three sets of the works of Honoré de Balzac, a plumber's repair-kit, an attic full of spinning-wheels, cord bedsteads, and fire-tongs that she assured me would come in handy if we were ever able to have a house with a fireplace in it. I agreed that the spinning-wheels, the cord bedsteads, and perhaps one or two of the sets of Balzac might be utilized to some advantage if we ever got the fireplace, but Evelyn refused to be discouraged by my

A HORSE DOCTOR HAD BEEN SUMMONED TO EXERCISE HIS SKILL IN THE PATIENT'S BEHALF lack of appreciation. She went on picking up bargains here and there until one day in early summer when Robinson's Mammoth Circus came to the beautiful suburban city in which we lived.

It was then that Evelyn secured the biggest bargain of her fair young life. The name of her bargain was Archie. Business had called me away from home for a few days. When I returned Archie was on my hands.

I may as well explain that Archie was a camel. One could tell almost at a glance that he was a camel, but I never saw a camel that was in as bad repair as Archie seemed to be when I first beheld him. He was in a recumbent position in our back yard and Evelyn was holding a bottle for a horse doctor who had been summoned to exercise his skill in the patient's behalf.

I must give Evelyn credit for having exhibited unexpected wisdom in sending for a horse doctor. I should never have thought of asking a horse doctor to prescribe for a camel. Yet, when you come to think of it, why shouldn't medicine that is good for a horse be good for a camel? The horse doctor's name was Allen T. Rector. I give it in full, because he was a highly moral man and, knowing him to be such, I did not answer Evelyn candidly when she asked me what I thought of her bargain.

Archie had been a part of Robinson's Mammoth Circus and Menagerie, but constant traveling, irregular meals, and other hardships incident to circus life had interfered with his well-being. This much the manager of the show admitted to Evelyn when he offered to sell Archie for thirty-five dollars. Furthermore, he had assured her that Archie had cost several thousand dollars and might, with proper treatment, be made as good as new.

It would be unfair of me not to give Evelyn credit for having been actuated by humane feelings as well as by the desire to secure a bargain when she purchased Archie for twenty-seven dollars and fifty cents, the price on which she and the manager of the show had finally compromised. The manager said Archie would die of mortification if he could know that he had been disposed of for such a ridiculous figure, but I don't believe Archie would have cared. He seemed to be too busy dying of other things to bother over the matter of his intrinsic worth.

" You can see, can't you, dear," Evelyn explained, " that it would have been cruel to let them take Archie away with them? I am sure that he would not have lasted another week if he had remained with the circus."

Archie looked plaintively at me, as if his whole future depended upon my answer, but I declined to become enthusiastic over him.

" What do you intend to do with him in case he pulls through?" I asked.

" Let us not speak as if there could be any doubt about it," Evelyn answered. " We simply *must* pull him through. The doctor says he has more than an even chance. There will be plenty of things to do with him when he gets well. We might rent him out to some park, or we can keep him here. It will be a kind of distinction to have a camel. None of our friends have camels. And, if we care to do so, I suppose we can take in quite a little money by charging children for riding on him."

" Or," I suggested, " you might take me to town on him in the mornings. It would be fine exercise for both of us, and in that way we could acquire the motions for the new dances, too."

Ignoring my remark, Evelyn turned to Mr. Rector, the horse doctor, and asked him if he didn't think Archie was already beginning to show signs of improvement.

" He does seem to be takin' more notice than he did at first," the doctor replied. " I guess we're goin' to save him."

I began to hate the horse doctor for the confidence he expressed, and I was more than half glad when Archie, while making an effort to get up, flopped over on his side, pinioning the veterinarian against the back fence. He managed at length to wriggle out and, after administering a bucketful of medicine to the camel, directed Evelyn to let him know if our patient grew worse. Then he went away and Evelyn and I were alone with Archie.

But we were not permitted to be alone with him for long. Fortunately our next-door neighbors were away for the summer, but Hanley, a man who lived in the next block, happened to be passing presently with a cur that generally followed him around. The dog evidently scented Archie, not that scenting Archie was remarkable or difficult, and he came bounding back into our yard. Fearing the worst, Evelyn called Hanley to come and get his dog, which was barking fiercely at Archie and threatening to chew him up.

"What is it, a camel?" Hanley asked when he had chased his dog over to a corner of our bungalow where the brute, with the hair on the back of his neck bristling terribly, growled and barked by turns and seemed determined to return to the attack upon our pet.

"Yes," I assured him, "it's a camel. There is his hump, and even if you couldn't see that, it would be easy to tell by his feet that he was a camel."

"He seems to be sick," said Hanley.

"Oh, but he's getting better," Evelyn assured him. "Won't you please make your dog go home? I'm so afraid he may upset Archie's nerves, and what he needs most now is perfect rest and quiet."

Hanley chased his dog out of the yard and returned.

"What seems to be the matter?" he asked.

"Nervous prostration," I said, thinking it might be well to make Archie as fashionable as possible.

"Whose is it?" Hanley inquired.

"He belongs to us," Evelyn answered. "Don't you think he's a dear, darling old fellow?"

"I never knew before that you had a camel," said Hanley, evading her question.

"We haven't had him long," I explained. "Mrs. Goodwin bought him at a sacrifice and brought him home only a little while ago."

Archie emitted a dismal moan and attempted to assume a kneeling posture, but gave it up and flopped back upon his side.

"Are you thinking of going into the show business?" Hanley asked.

"Of course not," Evelyn replied. "As soon as he gets well we will sell him. A good, healthy camel is worth a lot of money, and there is always a ready market for them. The man I bought him from told me we would have no trouble in disposing of him as soon as he got upon his feet."

"He looks as if you may have to keep him in stock for some time," Hanley remarked.

Other people began coming in then, and in a little while the story of Evelyn's wonderful bargain was known to everybody in our end of town. I fancied that some of our fellow citizens regarded me with pity. They seemed to think that Evelyn had shown poor judgment or questionable taste or something of the kind when she had brought Archie into my life, and I resented their lack of enthusiasm.

There was one man in particular who exasperated me. He was a fat, middle-aged person of the name of Tinker.

"Camel, eh?" he said when he had pushed his way through the crowd that surrounded Archie and us.

I shouldn't have minded it if he had spoken respectfully, but he addressed me in a superior way, as if owning a camel were immoral or a sign of social inferiority.

"Yes," I replied with some asperity, "your intuition is correct. It is a camel."

"Um-m-m!" he grunted. "Looks tired like and a bit discouraged."

"Can you blame him?" I asked, glancing around at the people who had been questioning us about Archie and making idiotic suggestions concerning the manner in which a sick camel ought to be treated.

After that I noticed that the crowd began to diminish, but Tinker did not appear to be disposed to hurry on about his business.

"What do you expect to do with him?" he asked.

"I think," I replied, "that I shall fatten him. I have never seen a fat camel, but I don't know of any reason why there should not be fat camels as well as fat men."

"No reason in the world," he replied, either too stupid or too stubborn to appreciate my sarcasm. "Don't let him worry if you want him to put on weight. There's nothing like worry to keep a man thin, and I s'pose it's the same with a camel. Have you got a license for him?"

"Why should I get a license for him?" I asked, pretending to regard his question as trivial; but it worried me. I was not sure that we would be permitted to keep a camel without a license, and I had no idea what it would cost if we had to have one.

"I'd look into the matter if I were you," said Tinker. "He probably comes under the head of domestic animals, unless you intend to list him as a household pet, the same as a canary or a goldfish."

I did not conceal from Tinker the fact that I was losing patience with him, and he presently went away, followed by the others who had lingered for the purpose of finding out what our intentions concerning Archie might be. When Evelyn and I were alone again she turned to me and pathetically asked:

" What are we going to do with Archie to-night?"

" I know what we are not going to do with him," I replied, a little more severely, perhaps, than was necessary. " We are not going to sit up with him or put him in the care of a trained nurse."

" But we can't leave him out here alone," she said. " Something might happen to him."

" No such luck," I replied.

" What if he should have a sinking spell?" she asked.

Her suggestion caused me to take courage. I hoped he would have a sinking spell, but just then Archie shook himself together, assumed a prayerful attitude, and looked at me with a reproachful expression, as if he had read my thought. We then fed him half a tubful of gruel the horse doctor had prepared, and he ate with a relish that filled Evelyn with hope.

" Harry!" she exclaimed, " he's going to get well. You can see that he is stronger already. I feel sure that he is going to turn out to be a wonderful investment for us."

The camel did seem to chirk up wonderfully after eating that gruel. I had noticed that the horse doctor, in preparing it, had emptied into the mass of stuff something from a big brown bottle, and the actions of the camel after he had consumed it caused me to become suspicious. Knowing Mr. Rector to be a highly moral man, however, I dismissed my suspicions, and we left Archie for a while to meditate undisturbed.

While we were at dinner four reporters called us up by telephone to find out about our camel, and Evelyn began to be hysterical when it became evident that we were to be the central figures in a sensational story which would probably be published all over the country. More for the purpose of diverting her thoughts from the newspapers than for any other reason, I got her to assist me, after dinner, to build a fence around Archie, and at dark, weary and with blistered hands, we left him.

It was shortly after midnight when Evelyn aroused me from peaceful slumber to tell me that Archie had been seized with a terrible coughing spell and was dying.

" Get up!" she cried, " and run for the doctor."

" Why don't you telephone for him?" I asked, for I was in no mood to run after a doctor for a sick camel.

" He has no telephone," she pathetically replied. " Hurry, dear, please, or I'm afraid we shall lose him."

I got into my clothes as quickly as possible and hastened out into the night. The horse doctor lived a half-dozen squares away, and, knowing that Evelyn would be in the deepest distress until I returned with him, I began to run. I was within about two blocks of my destination and sprinting on my second wind when a policeman who had been concealed behind a stately elm leaped upon me. As he did so he gave a shrill whistle for help.

" Put your hands above your head and kape them there!" he commanded as he laid hold of me.

" Wait, officer," I pleaded; " you don't know what you're doing."

" I don't, eh?" he replied, giving me a jerk that almost dislocated my neck. " I'll show you whether I know what I'm doin' or not. Kape your hands up!"

He was nearly twice as big as I and ought to have been ashamed of himself, but he wasn't. In addition to his advantage in size he was armed with a club which he held in a threatening manner above my head.

" Don't hit me," I begged. " I'm an innocent man. I was only running for a doctor."

" Runnin' fer a doctor, was you?" he sarcastically remarked. " Who was you runnin' fer a doctor fer?"

" For a sick camel," I assured him.

" Here, now, none o' that!" he said. " Don't you try to git funny with me, and it won't do you anny good to pretind you're crazy. Kape your hands up!"

While I was trying to convince him that he had made a serious mistake another policeman arrived, and they decided, in spite of my explanations, to take me to the station-house. I begged them to let me communicate with the horse doctor first, but they refused to believe that my plea was not a part of a plot to get in touch with confederates and I was rudely hustled along. On the way to the station I promised myself the satisfaction, if Archie survived his coughing spell, of slipping a large dose of poison into his gruel at the earliest opportunity that might present itself.

At the station the sergeant in charge

listened wearily to my story, and when I had finished he gave directions that I should be locked up until morning.

“ But wait,” I pleaded. “ You can telephone to my wife and find out whether I have been telling the truth or not.”

“ Very well,” he replied, “ who's your wife, and what's your number?”

Then it occurred to me that Evelyn, in her nervous, excited state, might suffer serious consequences as a result of the shock if she were to be informed that I was under arrest, and I tried to explain the situation to the sergeant, suggesting that he send me home accompanied by an officer or two, if he thought it necessary, to verify my account of the adventure.

It was no use. He refused to place any confidence in me and again ordered me to a cell. As I was being dragged away he suddenly called out:

“ Bring him back here!”

When I again confronted him he asked:

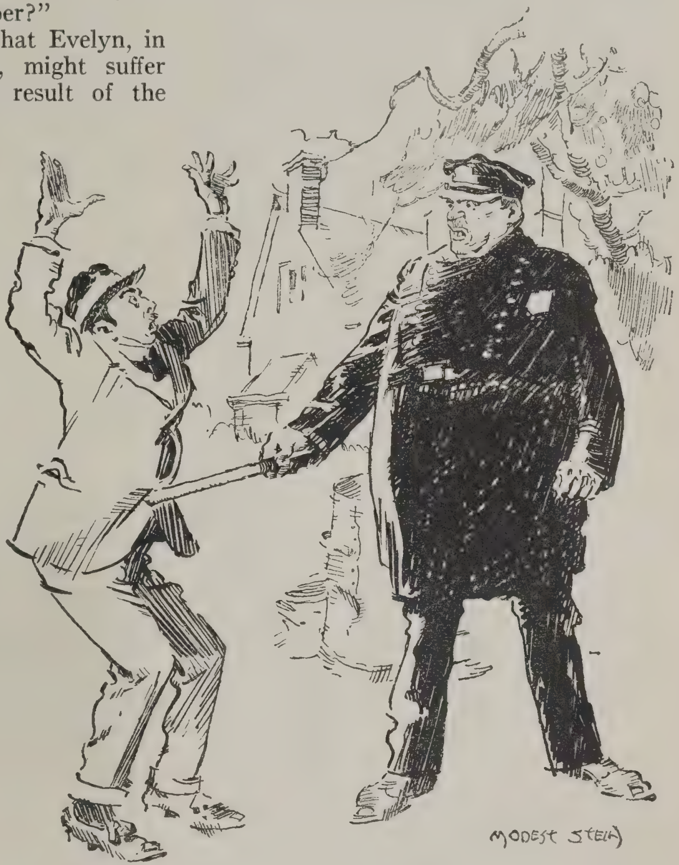
“ What was that you said about a camel?”

“ My wife bought a camel yesterday,” I replied. “ His name is Archie. He is sick and may be dying. You don't realize what you are doing. I was running for a doctor when your man arrested me. This is an outrage that you people will live to regret. I'll see whether—”

“ Cut out the threats,” the sergeant interrupted. “ I've seen your kind before. That's a fine line of bunk you have. So your wife bought a sick camel and his name is Archie? Say, have you been hittin' the hops, or what is the matter with you, anyhow? Take him out and lock him up. He may be lucid in the mornin'.”

It began to be evident that my predicament was becoming serious. If it had not been one o'clock in the morning I might have telephoned to some of my friends to come to my rescue, but one doesn't like to arouse people in the middle of the night to inform them that one is being held in a police station as a suspicious character.

Fortunately I happened to think of Billy Nevins. I knew Billy would take it in good part when I explained things to him, and the sergeant, after satisfying himself that everything was regular about Billy's number, as it was given in the telephone directory, granted me permission to call him up.



“ HERE NOW, NONE OF THAT. KAPE YOUR HANDS UP ”

The operator at the exchange twice informed me that 8362 did not answer, but I urged her to keep on ringing, and at last I heard Billy drowsily ask:

“ Well, what's wanted?”

“ This is Harry Goodwin,” I answered. “ I'm at the police station. Can you come right away and get me out?”

He recognized my voice, but, thinking I was endeavoring to make him the victim of a joke, flippantly replied that the police station was a good place for me to be in and said he hoped I had a comfortable cell.

" This is a serious matter," I assured him. " I was running for a horse doctor, and a policeman who thought I was an escaping robber arrested me. I want you to come and identify me."

" Running for a horse doctor, were you?" he replied. " Why not run for alderman or the Legislature? It's easier."

" But we have a sick camel at our house," I explained, " and I was going to get a horse doctor to save his life. Come on, Billy. For Heaven's sake don't let them keep me here all night. My wife will be frightened out of her wits, and Archie may die."

" Who's Archie?" he asked.

" Archie is the camel. Can't you understand?"

" No, I can't. Give me something easy. Say, I've got to have rest. If you haven't anything more important than a sick camel to tell me about I'm going back to bed."

" Wait, Billy, wait!" I pleaded. " This is all straight. I'm a prisoner in the police station and they won't let me out unless you come and vouch for me."

There must have been something convincing in the sound of my voice. At all events, he promised to come right away, and I hung up the receiver, much relieved. The sergeant and the policemen who were guarding me looked as if they were beginning to think I was crazy rather than a criminal.

" What are you doin' with a sick camel, anyhow?" asked the sergeant.

" My wife bought him at a bargain," I explained. " You don't know my wife. If you did you'd understand about this camel. My wife can't resist taking advantage of bargains. We don't need a camel—haven't the slightest use on earth for one—but she had a chance to get this camel at what she considered a sacrifice and she bought him."

" Why don't you get a doctor for your wife instead of the camel?" the sergeant asked.

" See here," I said, flaring up, for I allow no man to disparage Evelyn, " I won't stand for any sarcastic remarks concerning my wife. If she wants a camel she shall have one in spite of the entire police force of this town. Just let that be thoroughly understood, if you please."

" Very well," he answered, winking at one of the grinning policemen who stood ready to pounce upon me if I attempted to escape, " let her have two camels, if you like. It's none of my business, so long as your live stock stays at home and behaves itself; but I wouldn't care for that kind of a pet myself. What's the matter with this camel?"

I described Archie's condition as well as I could, and when I had finished the sergeant shook his head.

" You'd better let him die while you have the chance," he said, " and save trouble. That's my advice, if you've been tellin' us the truth. Camels is all right in their places, but they ain't no good at helpin' to make things look bright and cheerful."

I was in no mood to argue with him. In fact, his sentiments concerning camels were in strict accordance with my own, and I secretly hoped that Archie might be a corpse when I got home. It was while I was indulging in such thoughts that Billy Nevins arrived.

I shall not dwell on the difficulty I had in convincing him that I had not been indulging too freely in forbidden beverages, nor shall I repeat the playful things he said when he found out that I had been telling the truth about our camel and the manner in which I had run afoul of the law. He secured my release, and I started for home after an absence of more than two hours.

Evelyn was waiting for me. When I saw her I was frightened. Her condition bordered on hysteria. Our maid had for an hour been applying wet cloths and endeavoring to convince her that I was neither lost nor a victim of foul play.

On my way home I had been inclined to consider my wife foolish, and I am afraid I may have had some uncharitable feelings concerning her keenness for bargains. I even formulated several cutting statements that I intended to make for her future guidance, and it was my intention to insist upon immediate action that would forever relieve us of responsibility concerning Archie. But one glance at Evelyn caused all my anger to depart and my self-pity to vanish.

" Oh, Harry!" she cried, flinging herself into my arms, " it's too late!"

" Is he dead?" I asked, trying not to seem too hopeful.

"It's too late! Too late!" she wailed.

I began to have serious misgivings. There was a wildness in her look and her utterances that I didn't like. I turned to the maid to ask for an explanation, but before I could speak she said:

"He's went."

"Who has went?" I demanded, forgetting that my trouble was no excuse for an onslaught upon the past perfect.

"Him," the maid replied, giving her head a jerk in the direction of our back yard.

"It's Archie," Evelyn added. "He's gone."

I had harbored unfriendly intentions toward Archie. Notwithstanding the great value that might attach to him in the event of a restoration of his health, I had hoped for the worst in his case. Now I was sorry that I had wished him ill.

I recalled the pleading, wistful look that he had bestowed upon me at our first meeting, and a feeling of guilt surged in my breast. It suddenly occurred to me that perhaps he was a father, and the thought that orphaned camels might, because of my lack of discretion, be left to wander about, lonely and bereft, began to disturb me.

"Poor old Archie!" I said as tenderly as I could. "I hope his last moments were peaceful."

"He isn't dead," Evelyn replied, directing an accusing look at me; "he has run away. Why were you so long? You must call up the police headquarters at once and tell them to catch him."

When the police were mentioned my pity for Evelyn and for Archie departed. I fear I may have spoken harshly. I remember that as our maid withdrew she leveled at me a glance which was not one of admiration or even of whole-hearted respect.

After I had finished explaining to Evelyn the cause of my failure to return in haste with the horse doctor she chided me for not knowing better than to arouse the suspicions of the policeman by running. Such is the ingratitude of woman.

Having finished scolding me for my recklessness, Evelyn again became tenderly persuasive and, putting her arms around my neck, she said:

"We mustn't let him go, dear. We must find him somehow. Please call up the police and get them to help. Think what may happen if we let him wander around in the dark."

I tried to convince her that it would be time enough to start out after him in the morning, but she would not be satisfied.

"He might get into somebody's barn and ruin his digestion by eating things that are not good for him," she insisted, "or—oh, Harry! What if he should fall into a well?"

If I had known of a well into which Archie could have fallen I would have been glad to show him the way to it. At the moment I could think of nothing I would rather have seen him do than fall into a well. But I felt sure that no such fate was in store for him. Our suburb was not notable for its wells, and Archie's contour would have made it difficult for him to fall into one, anyhow. To satisfy Evelyn I finally called up the police station and asked for Sergeant McNally.

"Looky here," he said when I asked if he would be good enough to send out a squad of patrolmen in search of our camel, "this joke has gone far enough. If you're tryin' to put one over on this department, take a tip from me and switch off, see! I've got your number!"

I tried to explain that I was in terrible earnest, but he hung up without waiting for me to finish, so I gently but firmly informed Evelyn that since Archie had seen fit to leave us without due notice he would have to depend upon his own resources until morning.

There was little sleep for me during the rest of the night, but I fell into a fitful doze along toward daylight and was dreaming that I was conducting a camel-train across the desert when Evelyn aroused me to let me know that a Mr. Davidson, who lived over on the next street, had called to file a complaint concerning our camel.

It seemed that Archie, when he deserted us, had broken into Mr. Davidson's garden and ruined it almost beyond the possibility of repair. Mr. Davidson was an impulsive man and one who possessed certain racial characteristics in the matter of thrift, wherefore he did not hesitate to inform me when I confronted him that people who owned camels and permitted them to roam at large had no right to be treated with patience. He intimated in no uncertain terms that he would expect proper remuneration for the damage wrought by Archie.

" How do you know," I asked, being a bit nettled, " that your garden was ruined by our camel? Did you find him there? Have you caught him?"

" I know camel tracks when I see them," he replied.

" What led you to suppose we owned a camel?"

He held out a morning paper and pointed to a story under big head-lines on the front page. There it was in print. " Buys Camel at a Bargain. Mrs. Harry Goodwin Takes Over Ship of Desert," and all that. The reporters had even found out about my experience at the police station, and that, too, was published with picturesque embellishment.

Later, when Evelyn perused the terrible tale, she wept and launched disturbing accusations against me, with the result that I became possessed of an earnest desire to go far, far away, so that I might, among strangers, change my name and begin life all over again.

While I was trying to coax Davidson to be reasonable in his demands for damages our telephone rang and, with a sinking heart, I stepped over to the instrument and put the receiver to my ear.

" Are you Mr. Goodwin?" some one asked.

I admitted that I was.

" Well, this is the city pound-keeper. We have a stray camel here. Have you lost yours?"

" What makes you think I have a camel to lose?" I asked.

" I thought he might be yours," the pound-keeper answered, " because I see by the papers that you bought one. If this is your camel come and get him. He must be yours, because nobody else in this town owns one. Now I want to know what I shall do with him."

" Do anything you please with him," I replied. " I disown him. I cast him off forever."

The pound-keeper wanted to argue with me, but I hung up. Later we learned that Archie had been placed in one of the public parks, but Evelyn and I have never gone to find out whether he is well cared for or not. We have both been haunted by the fear that if we betrayed an interest in him he might be thrown back upon our hands.

Mr. Rector, the horse doctor, informed me when he called to collect his fee that he had put about a gallon of whisky into the gruel which he had prepared for Archie, and he thought that might have had something to do with the feeling of irresponsibility that had suddenly developed in our camel. It pained me to learn that a highly moral man such as Mr. Rector was could do such a thing, but as I consider the matter soberly and sanely now I am inclined to think it was perhaps best that things happened as they did.

I am still paying on the instalment plan for Archie's debauch, and Evelyn has not taken advantage of a single opportunity to secure a bargain since her camel ungratefully kicked down our back fence and eluded our guardianship.

COTTON

White as a snow-flake, warm as May,
Siren of commerce day by day;
In soft serenity upcurled
She rules the markets of the world.

Born in the country's quiet heart,
Yet mistress of each throbbing mart,
Through her are fortunes lost and won,
This tropic daughter of the sun.

Those whom she favors with her grace
Meet wealth and power face to face;
Those whom she darkens with her frown
In trade's vast whirlpool swiftly drown.

William H. Hayne

DRY-CLEANING THE DRAMA

PLAYS THAT SOIL NOT—NEITHER DO THEY SIN—AND A FEW THAT DO BOTH

BY BURNS MANTLE

WHEN Cyril Maude arrived in America last fall it is easy to believe that he viewed with alarm, or at least with no little perturbation, the theatrical situation as he found it. Particularly as he found it in New York.

The stage was at that time wrestling, as it were, with the "significant note" of the season—the "significant note" being, this time, the play of vice and vice conditions, as last year it was the play of crooks and crookdom.

The heroes of the occasion, if one were to believe all that one heard, were a sorry and bedrabbled lot; the heroines a pitiful group of soiled victims forced into various appalling situations and made to fight for their honor and their lives as never heroines of any drama had fought before.

The play that soils not, neither does it sin, was, according to the gossip of the hour, a thing discredited, if not unknown. There were cartoons showing an empty theater and labeled "A Clean Play," and frequent reference was made editorially by those writers who pluck their subjects from out of the air to the managerial octopi who lured audiences into their theaters by the exploitation of the brothel play on the plea that it was educational.

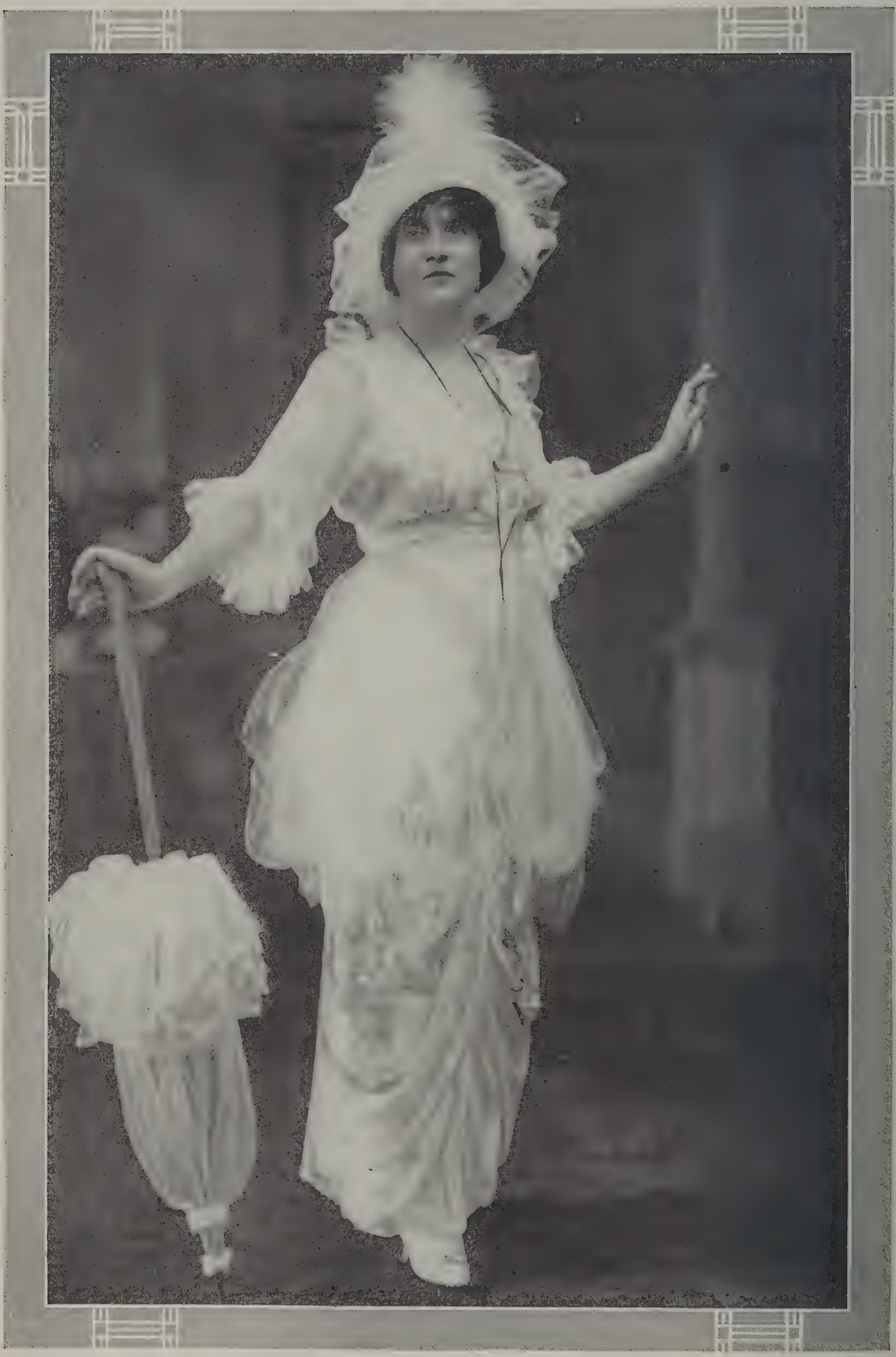
ENOUGH TO SCARE ANY ONE

It was quite enough to scare an actor-manager unfamiliar with the situation—especially one who had not so much as a suggestion of a vice play in his entire repertoire. And yet what could he do about it? He was here under contract to give a certain number of performances. There could be no backing out. He must go ahead with the plays he had and take the consequences.

Mr. Maude's first offering was "The Second in Command," the late Captain Marshall's perfectly clean and otherwise perfectly good drama. But it was an old and familiar play, and no one, speaking broadly, seemed eager to

ADONI FOVIERI, WHO CAME TO AMERICA FROM THE PARIS CONSERVATOIRE AND SPENT HER FIRST SEASON HERE AS UNDERSTUDY TO DORIS KEANE IN "ROMANCE"

From a photograph by Mishkin, New York



GEORGIA CAINE, SINGING IN "ADELE," IS AMONG THE LUCKY PRIME DONNE OF THE YEAR, AS HER PART PROMISES TO LAST THROUGH THE SEASON

From her latest photograph

see it. The English actor's personal success therein was considerable, his financial success nil.

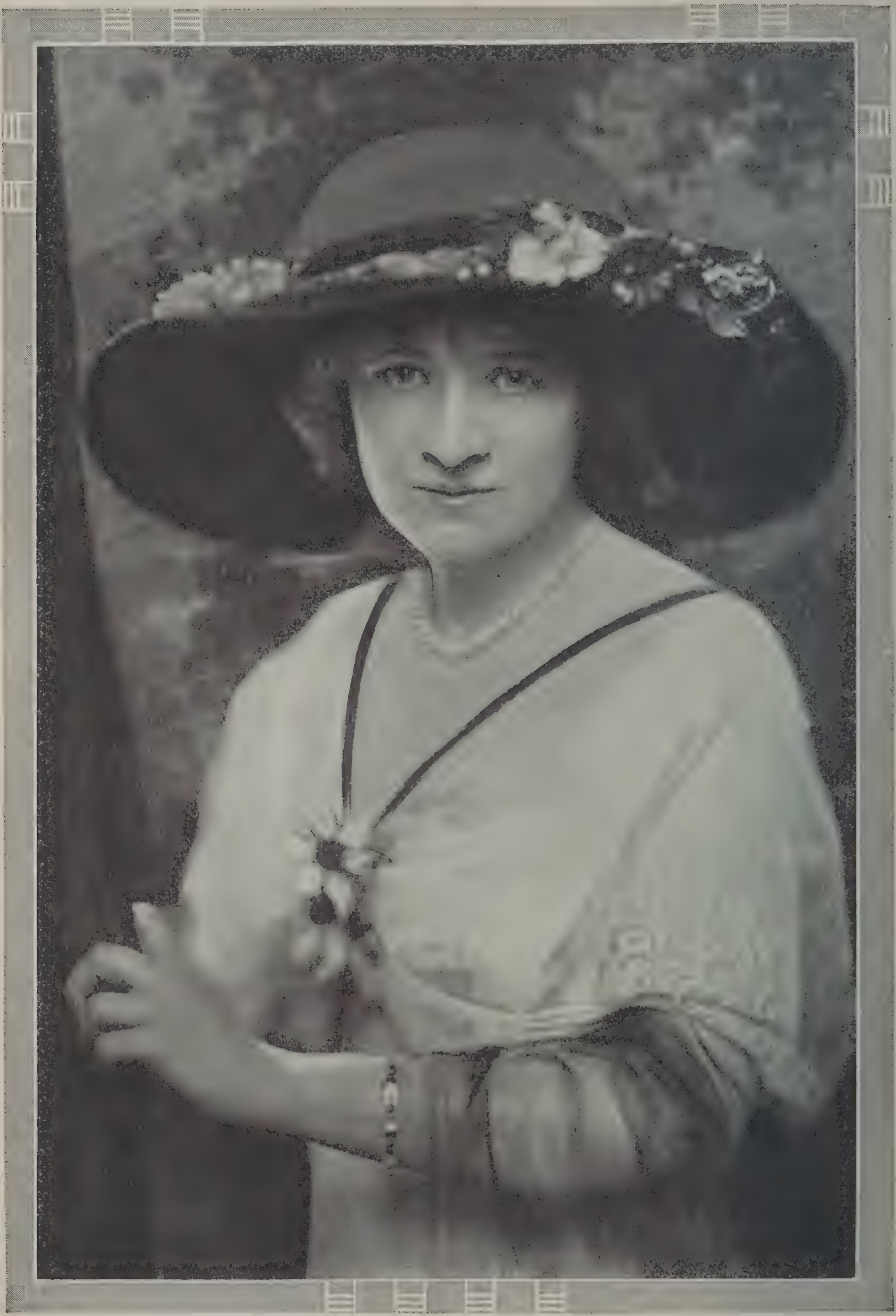
His second play was "The Beauty and the Barge," that farcical study of Thames river types, by W. W. Jacobs, Mr. Maude playing the hale and hearty *Captain Barley* of the good river-barge 'Eart an' 'And, whose excessive affability (in his own delicious conceit) played havoc with many a feminine heart. Again his personal success was pronounced, but his business continued something less than normal. And I dare say that by this time he had come to believe the reports true—that American playgoers had, in very truth, gone over to the enemies of morality and good taste and were no longer to be depended upon as supporters of virtuous and wholesome stage entertainment.

JULIA DEAN, IN "HER OWN MONEY," MAKES AN IMPASSIONED PLEA FOR AN EQUAL DIVISION OF THE FAMILY PURSE BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

From her latest photograph by Matzene, Los Angeles

MOTHERS' PROTESTS WERE HEARD

Meantime at mothers' meetings of one kind and another, and in the informal family council, there was much talk of a condemnatory nature; many resolutions were adopted and numerous protests registered by that bulwarked trinity of the press,



FRANCES STARR, ADVANCING STEADILY TOWARD A REPERTOIRE OF EMOTIONAL RÔLES, HAS A NEW PLAY, "THE SECRET," WRITTEN IN FRENCH BY BERNSTEIN, AND REFASHIONED IN ENGLISH BY DAVID BELASCO

From her latest photograph by Strauss Peyton, Kansas City

FRIEDA HEMPEL HAS THIS SEASON ENJOYED THE HONOR THAT GOES WITH THE CREATION OF A NEW RÔLE IN AMERICA. SHE RECENTLY APPEARED AS THE MARCHIONESS IN RICHARD STRAUSS'S "DER ROSENKAVALIER" AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA-HOUSE

From her latest photograph—copyright by Mishkin, New York

ANNA HELD'S DAUGHTER'S NAME IS LIANE CARRERA, BUT AS A SINGER AND DANCER IN VAUDEVILLE SHE IS ALWAYS CALLED "ANNA HELD'S DAUGHTER"

From a photograph by White, New York

"Veritas," "E Pluribus Unum," and "Old Subscriber," on the declining moral standard of American playgoers, particularly as it was to be nightly observed in this modern prototype of those unpopular civic centers, Sodom and eke Gomorrah.

Then Mr. Maude produced "Grumpy," the first new play he had offered, and within a week had completely confounded the pessimists of the day by proving to New York playgoers that they were, take them as they come and go, quite as decent and quite as clean-minded as ever they were.

"Grumpy" was clean, interesting, well-acted, and the response on the part of the public was, as it always has been and always will be to such entertainment, immediate and generous. Like unto the steady sweep of a prairie-fire in the crackling days of August the word spread that here was a clean play and a good play in the sense of being a good entertainment — a play on which one congratulated oneself for having seen, and went forth eagerly to spread the tidings, not only to the family, or the entertainment-hungry folk of the boarding-house, but to the men in the office and the bridge-players or struggling tangoists of the Friday night club as well.

WHOLESOME ENTERTAINMENT WINS

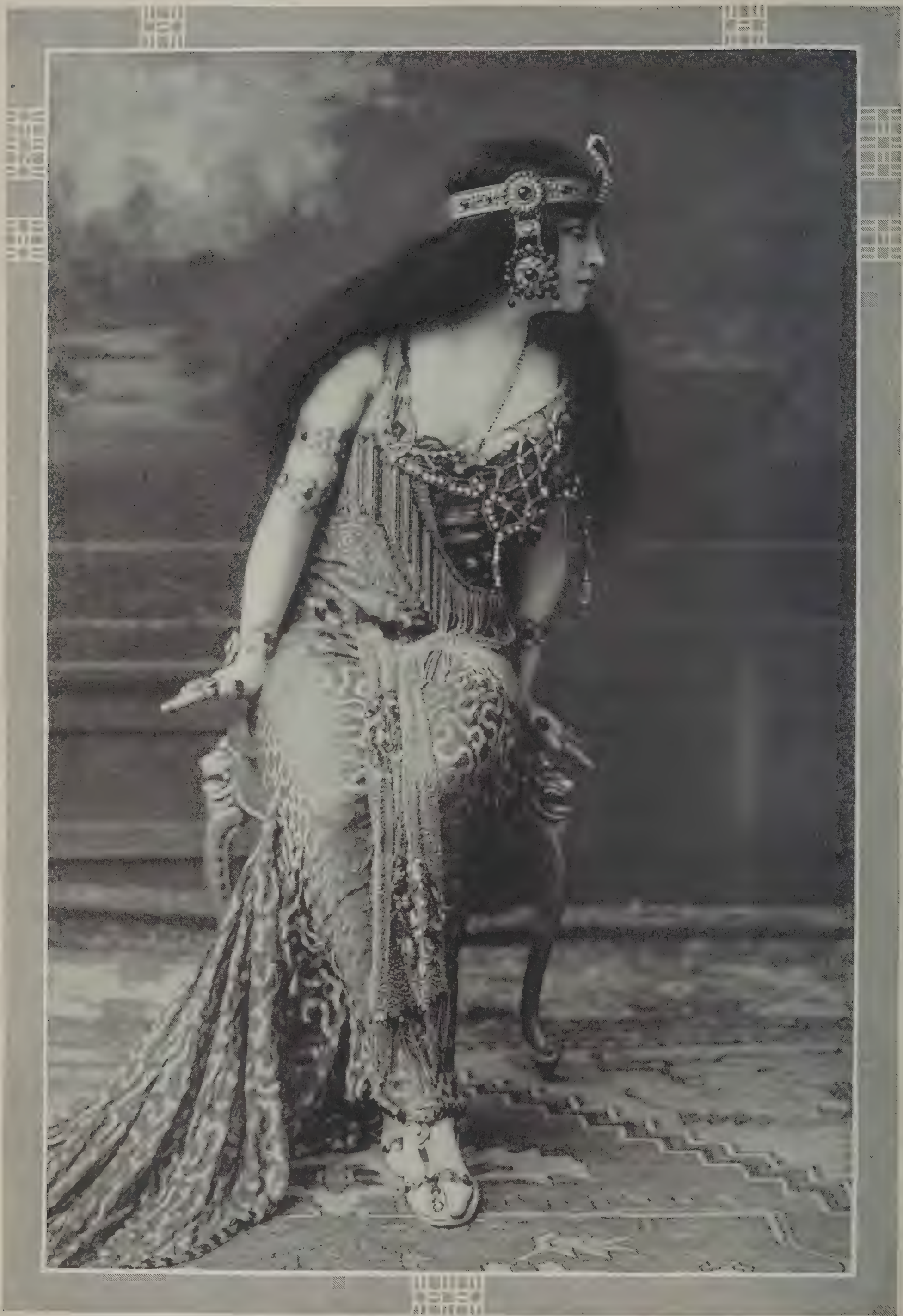
Within a week Wallack's Theater, where Mr. Maude was playing, although it is twelve blocks

BLANCHE RING INSISTS THE REAL "SHOW GIRL" IS NOT AS SPORTILY INCLINED AS THE COMIC PRINTS MAKE OUT. IN "WHEN CLAUDIA SMILES," SHE TRIES TO PROVE HER POINT BY PLAYING THE HEROINE AS "A GOOD FELLOW, BUT DISCREET"

From her latest photograph by White, New York

away from the theatrical center at Forty-Second Street, and costs most folk two carfares to reach it in comfort, became the theatrical Mecca of New York, and rattled to the tips of its dried old rafters with the laughter and applause of happy pilgrims.

Why? Because here again it was proved that the buyer from out of town, freed of the restraint of a watchful wife and his neighborhood critics, and eager to see something racy that he might later boast of it at home; the overdressed representatives of our cabaret and café sets and the typical boulevardiers who make a fad and not an intelligent fashion of theatergoing, do not and never can represent the real taste of the American playgoer. If they could they would have killed practically every clean play that ever has been offered along Broadway — from "Shore



PAULINE FREDERICK, THE FIRST CHOICE OF THE BEAUTY EXPERTS WHEN A "STUNNING WOMAN WHO CAN ACT" WAS CALLED FOR TO PLAY ZULEIKA, IN "JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN," NOW IN ITS SECOND SEASON IN THIS COUNTRY

From her latest photograph by Purdy & Co., Boston

Acres" to "The Fortune-Hunter," and from the repertoires of Joseph Jefferson and Sol Smith Russell to that of Maude Adams.

The success of Mr. Maude in "Grumpy," or that of Laurette Taylor in "Peg o' My Heart," is the only significant note that counts for anything. The rest represent no more than the ephemeral vaporings of the time.

HISTORY WILL REPEAT ITSELF

No man can frame a brief for the so-called "vital" and ugly drama from the history of the English-speaking stage, either in England or America, and whether that fact be attributable to the alleged moral cowardice of our respectable forebears or to the traditional decency of the Anglo-Saxon race matters little. It is a fact, and only facts are important.

Run your index-finger through a list of names representative of the best-known and likewise the best-loved of players and you will not find one who is remembered for the vicious or even for the questionable parts he or she has played, unless we stretch the point to include such classic offenders as that frail sister, *Camille,* or the ambitious *Lady Macbeth,* the brute part of Forrest's *Gladiator* or the ugliness of Mansfield's *Richard.*

And even accepting these, name me one such and I will tell you of a hundred known to those who remember them at all as representatives of humanity's ideals. Jefferson, Burton, Owen, Raymond, Booth, Barrett, Forrest, Cushman, Kean, Anderson, Neilson, Modjeska, Rehan, Herne, Thompson, Wallack, Sothern, Drew, Barrymore, Adams, Marlowe—to touch no more than the high places in the American list alone—what do they suggest more strongly than that a native dramatic taste embedded in so sound a foundation will never be pried loose and turned to baser ends—not within our day at least?

WHAT "GRUMPY" DID

It came to pass, then, that Mr. Maude, arrived in fear and trembling of the artistic and financial consequences of his tour, himself sounded the "significant note" of this particular season. In "Grumpy," which is a mild melodrama written by two English actors, Horace Hodges and T. Wigney Percyval, he appears as a doting grandfather of eighty odd years, irascible and tender by turns. As a young man he had been a rather famous criminal lawyer, and when his favorite nephew, carrying an uncut diamond valued at something over four hundred thousand dollars from the diamond-fields of Africa to London, stops at *Grumpy's* house, and is there robbed of the stone, all the old gentleman's thief-catching instincts are revived. He goes on nodding in his easy chair, or tottering uncertainly about his garden, but all the time he is following such clues to the robber as he is able to ferret out, and in the end, of course, brings the thief to book. Then, with a chuckle of satisfaction, he totters off to bed fussing good-naturedly with his faithful valet.

There is no describing the art of this gifted actor from oversea. I only hope that his tour has or will later come within reaching distance of your particular home town, and that you will see him in one or more of these delightfully simple characterizations of his. He is, without reference to the constructive weaknesses of some of his plays, at once a comforting and inspiring personality, wholesome, genuine, persuasive, and lovable.

A CHRISTMAS ANGEL'S EXPERIENCE

A further evidence that the good men do, for the playgoer, often lives with them and finally is recognized, is found in the experience of one Laurence Eyre, author of a play now called "The Things that Count," but known a year ago as "Mrs. Christmas Angel"—a deadly title in its suggestion of a plot all gummed up with sentiment.

Mr. Eyre is an actor, or was an actor, or tried to be an actor—anyway, he has had some experience on the stage. A year ago he peddled his play from office to office rather persistently and could find no takers. But finally, with the cooperation of the actors who wanted to play certain parts in it, he got a production for it at a series of three special matinées, Arnold Daly serving as stage-director. Few of the New York play-reviewers paid any attention to the piece. One or two wandered in and wandered out, counting it not worth an afternoon's time, with another play to review that evening. One or two, slaves to unyielding consciences, sat it through and wrote sympathetically, though not enthusiastically, of it next day. After the three matinées the play was discontinued.

Some time during the year that intervened Mr. Eyre evidently interested William A. Brady in it as a possible revival, because a few weeks ago it reappeared as "The Things that Count," without reference being made to its previous experience, and but slightly altered in form. This time the experts of the press were all present, and next day the town rang with their praise of "this simple, true, lovely little drama" which so perfectly stood for all that was best in the American theater. So much for the experts.

In "The Things that Count" Florine Arnold plays a crotchety grandam who, suspecting her simple husband of maintaining a second flat in an East Side tenement, follows him there to find it the home of her disowned daughter-in-law, played by Miss Alice Brady, the manager's own talented daughter. The son she had cast off because he married an actress person has died, and there is a little daughter who believes in fairies and accepts her grandmother as "an angel who walks the earth in strange form." The old lady, softened and repentant, begs leave to serve the little girl as a "Christmas angel" and organizes a party for the child's chums—a scene, by the way, of uncommon sentimental appeal. In the midst of the party the child faints from the excitement of it, and the identity of the Christmas angel being disclosed, the daughter-in-law extracts a morsel of sweet revenge by ordering her long-hated mother-in-law from the room. In the end the illness of the child brings about a conventional but sentimentally satisfying reconciliation.

THE PROCESS OF DRY-CLEANING

"Grumpy" and "The Things that Count" do not, however, complete the evidence in hand that, in New York, the current drama has been sent to the cleaners and returned almost as good as new. The process used in the renovation we conceive to be that known technically as "dry"—which is to say that the worst spots have been removed without injury to the fabric.

The final test came with the production of a play called "Ourselves," a thoroughly sincere but fairly unpleasant effort on the part of its author, Miss Rachel Crothers (she also wrote "The Three of Us" and "A Man's World") to present the wronged girl problem from at least three reasonable angles—those of the girl herself, the good woman who would reform her, and the man or men who are responsible for her continued existence.

The reviews of this play, which came late in the list of sex dramas, were mostly favorable—favorable, at least, in giving its author credit for the sincerity of purpose that prompted its writing. The cast was good, with Grace Elliston as the heroine—a young woman of the white-slave type taken from a home for incorrigibles by a society lady interested in reform and given a second chance in decent surroundings—though not with entire success so far as the surroundings were concerned, seeing that she promptly fell in love with her benefactress's brother-in-law. Miss Elliston achieved a personal triumph of moment.

Because, from a managerial standpoint, everything favored the play, it was watched closely by those who were trying to decide which way the winds of popular favor were blowing. Should it succeed, it would mean that there was still a market for the so-called strong drama, whatever the theme. If it failed, it would be an indication that the public had tired of the "ugly, but vital" stories of why the other half sins and that the sex play had, in fact, about run its unsavory course.

It failed. And as a result the new year found but one of the original brothel plays still successful on Broadway, and no others announced for early production. The good common sense of the playgoing public was again in the ascendent.

ANNA HELD'S DAUGHTER, AND OTHERS

Turn back, now, to the pictures. They are of more interest than anything else that has been done recently in the way of new plays. Consider that of Liane Carrera, for instance. Do you see a family likeness to Anna Held, or to the pictures of Anna Held? Probably, if you were not told that Mlle. Liane is the daughter of Anna Held, you never would have guessed it. And yet there is a stronger resemblance than the photographs of the two would indicate.

When Miss Held decided to return to America this year, daughter Liane begged to be brought along. She was just out of a convent in France and naturally eager to see the country in which her mother had achieved so much in the way of a professional reputation. Miss Held somewhat reluctantly consented, and Liane arrived, all wonder and enthusiasm. Evidently the air of freedom intoxicated her, for in less than a fortnight she announced in as definite terms as she could command her determination to try for a career upon the stage. Her mother objected, even pleaded with her daughter to change her mind, but young Liane was firm, and won the day.

"Very well," agreed the practical mother, "if you will, you will—and you will need all the help we can give you."

Whereupon she engaged a singing teacher, a dancing teacher, a modiste, and a stage-manager to coach her ambitious child. Three weeks later the début of Anna Held's daughter was accomplished at Hammerstein's Victoria Theater in New York. Her success was in no way tremendous, but entirely creditable. Assisted by a chorus of show-girls and a dancing partner, she sang and danced and wore, with a surprising lack of embarrassment, for a girl just out of a convent, a series of ultrafashionable and very scantish stage costumes that were rather startling. But so well did she please the booking managers that she was immediately engaged for a tour of the vaudeville theaters that it will take her more than a year to cover.

MAKING A STAR OF JULIA DEAN

The mere shifting of type in the advertising will technically make a star of a featured player. Thus did both Ann Swinburn and Julia Dean rise to prominence overnight this season.

Miss Swinburn started out as the featured member of "The Madcap Princess" company, and was fairly content with that honor. But a few weeks after the opening the interest of H. H. Frazee, who had produced the play, was bought by an outsider, said to be Gustave Schirmer, a publisher of music, and Miss Swinburn's name was next day transferred to the top of the billing. Instead of "'The Madcap Princess,' with Ann Swinburn," you were invited to see "Ann Swinburn in 'A Madcap Princess,'" a distinction without a great deal of difference to the layman, but of very great importance to oversensitive theatrical folk.

Julia Dean's elevation was similarly effected when she started touring with Mark Swan's bright little comedy drama, "Her Own Money." Miss Dean, after her strenuous year as the much-worried heroine in "Bought and Paid For," was this season cast for a second emotional rôle by Winthrop Ames, who at that time owned "Her Own Money." She was, however, merely one of an important group of players. When the play was sent out on the road the Ames interest was taken over by the Shuberts, 'tis said, and Miss Dean's name was put up as that of star.

She is an exceptionally sensible as well as promising actress, this same Julia Dean, and her progress has been slow but substantial, as all real progress is. She is a niece of the Julia Dean who was a famous actress in the early days of the American theater, and it was through Joseph Jefferson's admiration for the aunt that the current Julia was given her first part. She afterward played several seasons with the James Neill stock company on the Pacific coast, and later with the Hunter-Bradford players in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Hartford, Connecticut. She had her first New York chance in one of Nat Goodwin's companies, and since then has been prominent in many Broadway productions.

Miss Dean is one of the few actresses who admits that she is not beautiful. One of the criticisms to which she most frequently refers is that of a Western reviewer, who wrote of her: "She's ugly, but she *can act*." She is thoroughly in love with her work—does not refer to it as her art, and confidently expects to graduate into the rôles of sweet old ladies. She also has her own idea of the domestic life of players. A majority of those who are married are happier, she believes, than husbands and wives in the more common walks of life, because they do not see too much of each other. Their forced separations do not permit them to get on each other's nerves.

BEAUTY AND THE ACTRESS

Many contend that physical loveliness is the only open sesame that amounts to anything on the stage, and Harrison Fisher, the artist, is accredited with having at one time picked Pauline Frederick as being, in his estimation, the most beautiful of American actresses. Beauty without talent, however, never has advanced an actress very far. It may, for instance, have given Maxine Elliott her first opportunity with the Daly company, but it was Miss Elliott's rapidly developing ability that won and held for her her position as an actress. It may also have saved Jane Cowl several years of strenuous plodding, but it was not altogether responsible for her success in " Within the Law." Neither is Miss Frederick's success due solely to her good looks.

Not many years ago this young woman was playing small parts in some of Lew Fields's musical productions, positions she took to defray part of the cost of a musical education. She soon gave such promise as an actress, however, that she was chosen by William Gillette to support him in the New York production of " Samson." From there she was gathered in by the Liebler company to play the lead in Joseph Medill Patterson's " The Fourth Estate." Following this she married, and for a brief period gave up her stage work. Then, when the Lieblers were again looking for a beauty who could act, to play the rôle of *Zuleika* in " Joseph and His Brethren," the salary they offered Miss Frederick was too tempting to resist. She is now making her first tour of the country as a featured member of this company, sharing honors with Brandon Tynan and the veteran James O'Neill. She has not, however, given up all hope of an operatic career.

THINK NOT UNKINDLY OF THE SHOW-GIRL

It is Blanche Ring's idea that the Broadway show-girl, whose principal value to a musical production seemingly is to decorate the stage and furnish pictures for the newspapers, is a much misunderstood young woman. True, admits Miss Ring, the show-girl does figure in many divorce suits, but that is not really her fault. Her conspicuousness as a home-wrecker is due to her too generous nature. She strives to please. Her ambition is to be known as a " good fellow," and, being high-spirited, her excessive vivacity often gets her into trouble by creating a wrong impression as to the fundamental stability of her character. Therefore, Miss Ring insists, it is her desire this season to prove, through the medium of *Claudia,* in " When Claudia Smiles," that these valuable *figurantes* of the stage are really honest, home-loving girls. Their excess of youthful spirits is their greatest handicap.

Little Adoni Fovieri devoted her first year in America to learning the duties of an understudy. She is a graduate of the Conservatoire in Paris and was headed for the Comédie Française when she left there. But the list of possible future Bernhardts that stood between her and her ultimate opportunity on that historic stage was of such discouraging length that she decided to come to America. She landed first in Montreal, where she had some stock-company experience by way of perfecting her English, and then came on to New York, where they gave her an opportunity to understudy Doris Keane as leading woman in " Romance."

THE UNDERSTUDY'S CHANCE

It seems in France there is a law of the theater granting to an understudy a certain number of performances each season in lieu of a respectable salary. Mlle. Fovieri had some idea a similar custom prevailed here. So each night she stood patiently about the stage of the Maxine Elliott Theater in New York waiting for Miss Keane magnanimously to announce her temporary retirement from the cast, or at least to sprain an ankle, strain a vocal cord, have a fit of temper, or do any one of the things that would give the patient understudy a chance to act. Miss Keane, however, in love with her part in " Romance," went blithely on her way during the entire New York run of Mr. Sheldon's play. She never failed once to put in an appearance when she was expected. Which induced Mlle. Fovieri to forsake for good and all the business of understudying. She had a good part this season in " Children of Men," supporting Louis Mann, but unfortunately for her that play did not long continue.

HAPPY FRIEDA HEMPEL

You might speak of Frieda Hempel as one of the modern school of operatic soprani, seeing that she weighs considerably less than two hundred pounds. Last season Fraulein Hempel was not very happy. She had been miserably ill all summer and she came to America and tried to fill her opera engagements before she had recovered her strength. The result was discouraging, both to the singer and her friends. But this season all has gone well with her. She created the rôle of the *Marchioness* in " Der Rosenkavalier " for its first production in America at the Metropolitan Opera-House in December and achieved an immediate success. Naturally it is one of her favorite parts, and she was coached in it by no less a personage than Richard Strauss himself.

THE RAISING OF GEORGIA CAINE

Georgia Caine comes naturally enough by her stage talent. As a child she toured the small towns of Nevada, California, and Arizona with her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. George Caine, who were the proud possessors of a wagon show. Where the Caine family camped there was the center of dramatic activity of that particular district. If there was a town hall or an opera-house to be hired they hired it. If there was none, but a fair-sized audience in prospect, they built an opera-house on the spot.

It was a versatile family, too, playing everything from " Macbeth " to " Nan the Good-for-Nothing." Little Miss Georgia's principal contribution to the excitement of the time was to be abducted by Indians and rescued by cowboys. She believes that she can prove that she has been stolen and rescued more times than any other stage child known to the history of the drama. Miss Caine's ambition grew as they lengthened her skirts. And she was not far advanced in her teens when she came East, looking for higher honors in the profession. Because she could sing and dance she drifted into musical comedy and has stayed there. She has appeared with most of the singing and non-singing comic stars of the day, and this season she is prominently cast in the successful " Adele," which promises to run the theatrical year out in New York.

FRANCES STARR'S CHANGEABLE NATURE

There can be no reasonable objection to the morals of Henry Bernstein's " The Secret," which is Frances Starr's new play this season, though it does have its French comedy moments. But one does feel a rather conscious resentment that this attractive young actress is again asked to play an unpleasant part.

A few years ago she was struggling with the Tenderloin atmosphere of " The Easiest Way," convincing some that it was a great American play and others that it was awful. Later she had to contend against the handicap of *Becky's* rather mystifying dual personality in " The Case of Becky," and this season, in " The Secret," she is again eager to be good, but forced by her contrary nature to be bad.

In the Bernstein drama, which Mme. Simone played with success in Paris, Miss Starr is a jealous and unhappy woman. She delights in making people miserable. So uncompromisingly vain is she that she wants the happiness of each and every person in her own domestic set to radiate from and depend upon her. She disrupts the love-affair of her best woman friend and deliberately schemes to alienate her husband from his doting relatives.

In the end she is contrite and tearful, but having failed to establish even a reasonable excuse for the despicable nature the playwright has given her, she gets but little sympathy from audiences that she has irritated rather than inspired. Miss Starr expended all the energy included in her emotional equipment on this thankless part, but we fear it will make few new friends for her.

OUTSHOCKING THE SHOCKERS

While shocks were the order of the day in even the best of theaters, the little Princess, which boasts of its wickedness, had a difficult time outshocking the others. Thinking to inject a fresh interest into its bill, it recently introduced two new one-act plays, one called " Russia," the other " Hari-Kari." " Russia " was originally tried at a private rehearsal, and abandoned because of its possible offense to the religious element in the audience.

In this Harry Mestayer, as a liberal-minded priest hunted by the Russian government during the revolution of January, 1905, staggers into a resort in the lower section of St. Petersburg. He is about to be thrown into the street for fear his presence will bring the military down upon the house when Willette Kershaw, as one of the inmates, in the delirium of the moment believes she recognizes in him the reincarnated Savior. First she pleads permission to hide him from the soldiers, but later, in her confidence that he will miraculously confound the law and save them all, she betrays his hiding-place.

They drag the priest forth, and as the young girl waits confidently for him to perform the miracle she anticipated, they tie him to a stake and calmly order the slaughter of every person in the house. The curtain falls on nine military murders. The piece has been somewhat modified since originally presented at the dress rehearsal mentioned above.

THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

BY FRANK CONDON

WITH A DRAWING (FRONTISPIECE) BY WILL FOSTER

IN the upper right-hand corner of the map, near the pink island and slightly to the right of the mountain range—but what's the use? You'll never look it up.

You don't know where it is and you never heard about it. No one ever heard about it except an ancient conductor on the Boston and Albany, and he has been dead these many years.

At any rate, its name is Miscassett, and it is a small village in a New England State, which shall be nameless, except for the information that it is the antepenultimate word in the Fourth of July peroration sentence ending "—to California."

In Miscassett dwelt Myrtilla and Myrtilla's father and mother and brother and sister and the cat and the dog and the hard-coal stove from Detroit, Michigan. And in her nineteenth year Myrtilla leaned upon the garden gate, looking down toward Bob Mackay's harness-shop opposite the railroad station and communed.

"Life," said Myrtilla to herself, "is but an empty dream. I no longer wish to continue upon this mundane sphere if I have to keep on sphering here in Miscassett. I have lost my ambish. I am tired of seeing Bob Mackay come out of his harness-shop and whittle off a fresh slice of cut-plug. I have never done anything in my entire life except eat, sleep, and shell peas for dinner. The longing for greater and grander fields obsesses me. I want to see life and become somebody besides Jake Whitley's harum-scarum daughter. The sound of the solemn old church bell gives me a severe pain, and I can get along without seeing a cow milked for the next census or two. I am for the city. My soul reaches out dumbly to the rattle of flat-wheeled street-cars and peanut carts; I yearn for the melancholy odor of chicken chop suey and the deep, bass chortle of the subway guard. I want to wear a hobble-skirt and put lampblack on my eyebrows, and I will."

Saying which, in a firm, tense voice, Myrtilla spurned the garden gate and walked into the house.

"Myrtilla," said her father, "you are out of your mind even to think of such a thing. The city is a place of concentrated wickedness. It is the devil's harvest-field. It is a relentless dragon waiting, with dripping fangs, for just such country girls as you. Think of the beautiful, fresh, wholesome country about you and then give up this insane idea."

"Father," said Myrtilla gently, "I shall die if I continue to live in Miscassett."

"Think of us," Myrtilla's mother urged. "We shall worry about you constantly. We shall picture you undergoing privations, or perhaps in the clutches of cruel and designing men. The city is an awful place, Myrtilla, for young and innocent girls. You have read of the terrible things that happen to them in the Sunday newspapers."

"In the Sunday papers, mother dear," said Myrtilla, "is the only place where terrible things happen to girls from the country. I will go to the city and achieve a wonderful success and bring renown to the name of Whitley."

"What will you do in the great city?" asked her father and mother.

"I do not know at present. When I reach New York I will look about me and discover whether I am best fitted for art or literature or science or suffragetting. It is a city of unlimited opportunity, and no earnest girl can fail."

Passing hastily over the intervening

events we discover Myrtilla in a boarding-house in West Eighteenth Street. She is supplied with a modest amount of money. There are a number of nice persons in the boarding-house, and with them Myrtilla quickly becomes acquainted. There is Jones the artist and Smith the poet and Kelly the sculptor and Brown the actor. There is Therese the chorus-lady and Minnette the manicure-girl.

Right speedily the time flies. Myrtilla glances casually over New York and discovers that if a young girl from the country desires to climb the ladder of success she must hustle out into the highways and byways and find the ladder. While she waited for a position she amused herself in various ways.

Jones the artist escorted her to the ball of the Ink and Brush Club, upon which occasion Myrtilla tasted champagne for the first time and approved of it. Smith took her to a convention of poets, where she listened to recitations she could not understand, and ate smelly cheese. Brown inquired whether Myrtilla would like to see something of New York's night life, and Therese introduced her to a group of her dramatic friends. Furthermore, Myrtilla met a broker who owned a large blue motor-car.

Life surely volplaned on gilded wings. Occasionally Myrtilla thought of Miscassett and shuddered.

She learned to order a cocktail and to scold the waiter about its flavor. The Miscassett tan on her comely cheek gave way to the feverish flush of the Broadway make-up box. She went to work in a musical show and learned many strange things.

To the end of the table in the boarding-house came a new member. He was tall, slim, and exceptionally quiet. For a week his name was unknown to all except the landlady, and then it passed around. The newcomer was Benjamin Young. He was unemployed, but willing to change the condition.

He took no part in the nightly merriment about the table. He was somber, but he was attentive to the conversation of the jolly diners. Once or twice Myrtilla discovered him staring at her with a peculiar gaze in his eyes. Then he surprised her one evening. She was sitting on the steps reading the *Telegraph* when Mr. Young took off his hat and addressed her.

"Wouldn't you like to come and take a walk?" he said. "You look a little tired. Maybe the fresh air will do you good."

"Yes, I'll be glad to walk with you, Mr. Young," Myrtilla said after a pause.

They talked of many things. Myrtilla told him something about herself. He listened with a strange intentness.

During the next few months Mr. Young held many conversations with Myrtilla. He never attended the boisterous dinners in the strange little Italian wine places, but he listened to her accounts of the happenings. He was very busy most of the time in a commission-house down-town, and had little opportunity to take in the gay-life festivals.

It was seven o'clock one evening when he passed Myrtilla's door in the boarding-house. He stopped suddenly and listened. From within came the unmistakable sound of sobbing. Mr. Young turned the knob and pushed the door open.

Myrtilla lay face downward on the couch, with a pillow beneath her, into which she was crying desperately. She was unaware of Young's presence until he spoke.

"Well," he said quietly, "what's wrong?"

Myrtilla sat up hastily. She dabbed at her eyes, which were very red, with a cambric handkerchief. She pushed her disordered hair back from her forehead and tried to smile.

"N-nothing's wrong," she answered.

"That isn't so," he declared. "Tell me about it; I think I know already, but tell me, anyhow."

"Nothing—absolutely nothing," Myrtilla replied. She laid her head upon the pillow once more and began to weep afresh.

Then Mr. Benjamin Young did a very strange thing. He walked over to the couch, knelt down beside the weeper, and placed his arm around her shoulders. Myrtilla sobbed on peacefully and made no resistance.

"Now little country girl, tell me the whole business," said Mr. Young again.

Myrtilla began with little half-words, gurgles, gasps, broken sentences, and sniffs. Mr. Young patted her encouragingly. Gradually the weeping ceased.

"I'm so dreadfully sick of everything," she said mournfully. "I've had a terrible time, Mr. Young, and I thought I was enjoying life. At first it was all so new and fascinating. Everybody was nice to me. I had such a good time, but now everything is stale and flat. I'm discouraged and ashamed and disillusioned."

"And, among other things, you came pretty nearly going to the devil, didn't you?" Mr. Young said calmly.

Myrtilla nodded her head.

"But I didn't. I just went around and had a fine time and thought it would last forever, and now—and now—" Then the tears trickled through Myrtilla's fingers again.

"And now," Mr. Young continued for her, "you're going to give it all up. You're going to marry me and live happy ever afterward. You're going to cast the city aside forever and go back with me to the country—"

"To the country!" Myrtilla exclaimed, with widening eyes. "To the country!"

"Certainly, to the country. We're going back to my home in little old Sheepscott—"

"Sheepscott!" interrupted Myrtilla. "Why, that's only eleven miles from Miscassett."

"I know it. We're going back there among the flowers and birds and mountains and never think of lobster palaces and vaudeville shows again."

"Do you love me?" she asked curiously.

"Of course I love you. That's why I'm going to take you away from the city, where you don't belong, back to the open spaces, where you do belong. Which do you choose—this life and the city or the country and me? I've got two hundred acres in Sheepscott."

"I choose you," Myrtilla said softly, laying her head upon Mr. Young's shoulder. "You're awfully kind to me."

"Very fine," he said briskly. "You pack up your things as soon as you can. I'm going out now and settle up a few odds and ends and look up the time-tables. We ought to be on a train in the morning."

Wading River Junction is a small waiting-room. The east and west railway crosses the north and south. Travelers change trains at that point.

At seven o'clock in the evening Myrtilla and Benjamin—man and wife—descended from the accommodation, entered the waiting-room, and deposited their luggage with a combined sigh of relief. The most trying part of the journey was ended. Before them spread the glorious vista of the country.

II

"No," said Eleanor, shaking out the newspaper in the direction of her gloomy roommate, "there's no use in arguing with me. I'm tired of it all and I'm going to leave it. That's settled. What have I got? Look about this room and behold! I came to New York full of ambition. I wanted to do a thousand things all at once, and I haven't done much more than pay my expenses. I'm sick of it—sick—sick—sick!

"It's a city of boors and imbeciles and birds of prey. I go about and meet with insults in the open streets. I slave all day for a corporation that doesn't care a hang whether I ruin my health or not and pays me as little as possible. I am wearing myself out and I am getting nowhere. It is a heartless city, with pity for none, sympathy for none, and respect for none. Therefore I am going to leave New York to its shame. I am going to the country and spend the rest of my time where I can at least breathe fresh air and look at the growing things and talk to honest, courteous, clean-minded, simple people."

Eleanor rattled the paper vigorously. She was reading the time-table. Her roommate stared at her moodily.

"If you feel that way about it," she said finally, "by all means go ahead. Seek out the haunts of the blithe daffodil and the festive cucumber. Wreathe yourself with lowing kine and corn-silk, and harken to the merry call of the plowman and the katydid. Drink fresh buttermilk and uncolored butter. Bask in the radiance of churns, chickens, and cauliflower, and don't mind me. Pay no attention to me. Ignore the fact that when you go you incidentally throw me out of a home."

"You can get a new roommate," Eleanor said gently. "I am sorry to make trouble for you, Grace, but I must leave New York."

"When will you leave?" Grace asked.

"Immediately," Eleanor answered.

"I will go down to the station and weep while your train pulls out. I suppose I shall never see you again."

"Never," said Eleanor firmly, "unless you come to the country. I am bidding my final farewell to this hard, cruel city, with its mockeries and its vices, its artificiality and its sordidness."

Eleanor—on the books of the brutal corporation, Eleanor English, 345 West Seventy-Fourth Street, New York—curled up comfortably in the chair-car of the day express and gave herself up to a cheerful contemplation of the future. Eleanor was good to look upon. She had large brown eyes, glossy black hair, pretty teeth, the Cupid style of mouth, and a figure that reminded one of the ladies posing in the new Parisian gowns. She was slightly more than twenty. The large man at the end of the chair-car stared at her with much pleasure, but she saw nothing of him.

Once during the journey it was necessary for her to change trains. She gazed about her curiously. It was a very small village. She sniffed the fresh air delightedly.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the last train pulled into Miscassett. The engineer climbed down and felt the pulse of his iron steed for hot boxes. Bob Mackay, coming out of his harness-shop to whittle off a fresh slice of cut-plug, halted in astonishment and stared over toward the station.

"By gravy!" he exclaimed, "here comes a stranger. Nice-lookin' party, too."

He remained rooted to the plank until the stranger approached him, and then he began to blush. He was a large, pink-faced man, with a babyish roll of white flesh under his chin and a wide swath of hairless scalp, flanked on each side by a timid growth of blond hair.

"Could you direct me," Eleanor began, "to a good boarding-house where the price is not too high?"

"There is only one boarding-house in Miscassett, miss," replied the genius of the hold-back straps, "besides the hotel. Mrs. Fink runs the boarding-house, but there's never anybody boards there. There ain't many strangers in Miscassett at this time of the year—or any other. Mrs. Fink lives in the yellow house down by the bridge."

"Thank you," said Eleanor. "I've just come from New York and I'm rather tired. Can I find a truckman about?"

"No," answered Bob helpfully, "you can't. There ain't any truckman. You can get Matthew Metcalf to wheel your baggage in his wheelbarrow."

When the shades of evening had fallen Eleanor English was safely housed under the hospitable Fink roof. She looked about the immense room and sighed contentedly. No stuffy, miniature closets stared at her, as in the city. No dingy courtyard yawned beneath her window; no grimy, rusty fire-escape destroyed the beauty of the scenery, and no white brick walls shut out the sunshine of day and the stars of night. The silence of the country rested her worn nerves. Somewhere far off an owl hooted. The thousand harmonious noises of the country night came to her softly.

"This is life," said Eleanor, breathing deeply. "In the country, amid these gracious surroundings, I will expand—I will grow—I will live!"

Mrs. Fink called her to dinner and introduced her to the rest of the Finkian family. She looked upon the honest faces of the young people with an appreciative glance. Their clothing was homely but spotless; their hair was combed in the strictly Miscassett style, but their hands were clean.

"This is Miss English," said Mrs. Fink. "She has come to the country for rest and quiet. She is from New York City, where she has worked until she broke down."

After the evening meal Eleanor played dominoes with a young man who wore leather boots and a shock of yellow hair. She retired early and slept a just and sound sleep.

In the morning the younger members of the Fink family started through the village with the pleasing information that a strange and handsome young woman had come from New York and was staying with ma. From that time forward Miscassett discussed Eleanor with enthusiasm. The townspeople wondered who she was, why she came to Miscassett, what she intended doing, whether there was any scandal connected with her sudden appearance, and whether she had paid for her clothes.

The men of Miscassett mentally noted that she was a peach. The women sneered at her secretly. Eleanor discovered this during the first week.

Time fled on amain. Miss English wandered abroad from Miscassett and learned of Sheepscott, Merwin, Sanford, Bucksville, and other near-by villages. Slowly her recollections of the wicked and conspiring city faded out of her memory.

She found that the rural citizen is somewhat different from his fellow in the town. The Miscassett men took her abroad on straw-rides and on hunting and fishing trips. She went to a dance at Merwin with young Cy Fielding, and that heavy-footed youth trod upon her gown and ripped away the lower equatorial segment. After which he laughed good-humoredly at her discomfiture.

Edward Tindell escorted her shufflingly and timidly to the annual Miscasset lawn-fête, where to her huge embarrassment she was openly snubbed by the women. The mark of the city was upon her. She wore garments that fitted her.

Eleanor tried berrying under the guidance of the constable's son, and during the festive proceedings she scratched her arms in many places and immediately developed a malignant form of poison-ivy infection.

She drove abroad with the Beau Brummel of Bucksville, and encountered a violent rain-storm, during which the vehicle broke down. Mr. Brummel, with Eleanor's aid, patched up the damaged parts. Eleanor's loss was a pet suit.

One sunny afternoon she sat on the top of the mountain gazing toward the setting sun and wondering whether, after all, there was a just Providence who looks after little twenty-year-old girls, when the sight of an approaching felt hat disturbed her meditations. She recognized the hat instantly and blushed.

She had seen it any number of times in Miscassett. It was invariably located on the top of a curly brown head, the owner of which bore the pleasing name of Treadwell. She had not inquired of Mrs. Fink concerning him, because she had feared Mrs. Fink's lively tongue. In her moments of speculation Eleanor had placed Mr. Treadwell as the son of a near-by farmer. Now he was approaching. She studiously gazed at the setting sun.

The felt hat came nearer and nearer, and finally it stopped. Eleanor felt that Mr. Treadwell's eyes were fastened upon her, but she looked steadfastly in the opposite direction.

"There's a black snake curling round your heel," said Mr. Treadwell briefly.

Eleanor shrieked and leaped into the air. When she alighted she started to run, but her rescuer caught her.

"No," he said, "I'm not going to allow you to run away. You've avoided me long enough. Now I'm going to hold you prisoner, seeing that I have just saved your life."

"The snake wouldn't have hurt me," Eleanor said defiantly. She observed that Mr. Treadwell's hand was upon her arm, but she made no protest.

"I know who you are," he began. "You're Eleanor English, from New York. My name's Billy Treadwell. What in the world are you doing in this God-forgotten country?"

Eleanor sat down on a pine log and looked long and earnestly at her savior. Then she put her hands up to her face and began to weep.

"I thought so," said Billy sympathetically. "Go right ahead. Have a thorough cry and then tell me about things."

"There's nothing much to tell," Eleanor said after a long spell of moistness. "I was terribly tired of New York. I came away to the country. At first it seemed glorious — free — beautiful. Then things began to go wrong. People talked about me. Everybody seemed rough and unsympathetic and brutal. The cows and the chickens and the flowers and the sunsets began to bore me and I got lonesome —oh, so lonesome!" Eleanor started to weep afresh.

"There, there," said Billy tenderly. "Don't cry any more." But Eleanor cried. So it was necessary for Billy to put his arm around her so that she could cry on his shoulder.

"It's all over," said Billy, after another long pause. "You go back to Mrs. Fink. Tell her that you're through with Miscassett and the country and that you're going to marry Billy Treadwell and go back with him to his home in New York, and—"

"New York!" Eleanor exclaimed. "Did you say New York? I thought you were a farmer and lived up here."

"My dear," Billy answered, "I have been laying out a new railroad for my dad, who thinks I don't know enough to work. I live on Seventy-Second Street, New York City. Now let's not waste any time. I'm through up here. To-morrow we can start. I know the finest minister around here, and we'll be married before we leave. We're going back to the taxicabs and the all-night restaurants and the theaters."

"But you don't love me, do you?" Eleanor asked curiously.

" I've loved you since the afternoon you got off the train in Miscassett. I'll love you more every day. Which do you choose: this life and the country or the city and me? I'll be president of the company when dad dies."

" I choose you," Eleanor said softly, laying her head upon Mr. Treadwell's shoulder. " You've been awfully good to me."

At eight o'clock in the evening Eleanor and Billy, man and wife, descended from the accommodation, entered the waiting-room at Wading River Junction, and deposited their luggage with a combined sigh of relief. The most trying part of the journey was ended. Before them spread the glorious vista of New York City.

III

Eleanor and Billy sat in the dusk of the waiting-room and looked about them. At the opposite side was a long bench, and seated upon it were two figures.

" They look like bride and groom," whispered Eleanor to Billy.

At the same moment Myrtilla, cuddling close to Benjamin, glanced across the room and whispered:

" They look like bride and groom, Benjamin."

" I dare you to speak to him," said Eleanor to Billy.

" I dare you to speak to him," remarked Myrtilla to Benjamin.

The two men were upon their feet simultaneously. They met in the middle of the room.

" Beg pardon," Billy began. " It seems a rude question, but it isn't. Are you just married?"

" Exactly," smiled Benjamin. " Are you?"

" Precisely," replied Billy. " Let's introduce the girls. My name's Billy Treadwell."

" Mine's Benjamin Young."

The two brides were formally introduced. They cooed together. The husbands spoke in low tones.

" We're on our honeymoon," said Eleanor, taking Billy's arm. " Miscassett is a pretty village, but we're going home to dear old New York."

" We are on our honeymoon, too," said Myrtilla joyously. " New York is a charming place, but we're on our way home to dear old Miscassett."

" How odd!" remarked Billy.

" How exceedingly odd!" replied Benjamin.

Two trains rumbled in the distance, tooted, slid into the station, and finally stopped.

The two wedding-parties separated and retrieved their luggage. They scrambled for their respective trains.

" Good luck to you," chorused Billy and Eleanor.

" Good luck to you," shouted Benjamin and Myrtilla.

The trains drew away in opposite directions.

" I'm sorry for them," said Billy in the south train.

" I'm sorry for them," remarked Benjamin in the north train.

IV

" Ah!"

Billy drew in his breath rapturously. The million lights of the city gleamed below him. Trolley-cars jangled at the foot of the apartment building. The long-drawn wail of river steamers floated over the park and the murmuring voice of the city whispered its never-finished secret. Eleanor stood beside Billy, with her arm through his.

" Great, isn't it?" he said. " Isn't it the wonderful place? How would you like to go down-town to a good roof-garden show to-night, dear one?"

" I'd just love it," replied Eleanor, nestling closer.

They turned away from the window blissfully.

V

" Ah!"

Benjamin sighed contentedly. The hush of the country night was over everything; the big farmhouse stood on a knoll just outside of Sheepscott. On the lawn, Benjamin and Myrtilla stood side by side, gazing across the murky hills, listening to the plaintive song of the tree-toads and the chirp of crickets.

" Perfectly grand, isn't it?" she sighed. " Isn't the country the marvelous place, after all? Dear, wouldn't you like to go over to the old bridge and watch the moon come up?"

" Nothing could suit me better," replied her husband.

They turned away blissfully.

IMPERISHABLE FICTION

AN INQUIRY INTO THE SHORT LIFE OF THE "BEST SELLERS" REVEALS THE METHODS WHICH BROUGHT INTO BEING THE NOVELS THAT ENDURE

BY RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

THE longevity of trees is said to be in proportion to the slowness of their growth. It has to do no little as well with the depth and area of their roots and the richness of the soil in which they find themselves. When the sower went forth to sow, it will be remembered, that which soon sprang up as soon withered away. It was the seed that was content to "bring forth fruit with patience" that finally won out and survived the others.

These humble, old-fashioned illustrations occur to me as I apply myself to the consideration of the question provoked by the lightning overproduction of modern fiction and modern literature generally: the question of the flourishing longevity of the fiction of the past as compared with the swift oblivion which seems almost invariably to overtake the much-advertised "masterpieces" of the present.

I read somewhere a ballad asking where are the "best sellers" of yesteryear? The ballad-maker might well ask, and one might reecho with Villon: "Mother of God, ah! where are they?" During the last twenty years they have been as the sands on the seashore for multitude, yet I think one would be hard set to name a dozen of them whose titles even are still on the lips of men—whereas several quieter books published during that same period, unheralded by trumpet or fire-balloon, are seen serenely to be ascending to a sure place in the literary firmament.

What can be the reason? Can the decay of these forgotten phenomena of modern fiction, so lavishly crowned with laurels manufactured in the offices of their own publishers, have anything to do with the hectic rapidity of their growth, and may there be some truth in the supposition that the novels, and books generally, that live longest are those that took the longest to write, or, at all events, underwent the longest periods of gestation?

Some fifteen years or so ago one of the most successful manufacturers of best sellers was Guy Boothby, whose "Dr. Nikola" is perhaps still remembered. Unhappily he did not live long to enjoy the fruits of his industrious dexterity. I bring his case to mind as typical of the modern machine-made methods.

I had read in a newspaper that he did his "writing" by phonograph, and chancing to meet him somewhere, asked him about it. His response was to invite me to come down to his charming country house on the Thames and see how he did it. Boothby was a fine, manly fellow, utterly without "side" or any illusions as to the quality of his work. He loved good literature too well—Walter Pater, incongruously enough, was one of his idols—to dream that he could make it. Nor was the making of literature by any means his first preoccupation, as he made clear, with winning frankness, within a few moments of my arriving at his home.

Taking me out into his grounds, he brought me to some extensive kennels, where he showed me with pride some fifty or so prize dogs; then he took me to his stables, his face shining with pleasure in his thoroughbreds; and again he led the way to a vast hennery, populated with innumerable prize fowls.

"These are the things I care about," he

said, "and I write the stuff for which it appears I have a certain knack only because it enables me to buy them!"

Would that all writers of best sellers were as engagingly honest. No few of them, however, write no better and affect the airs of genius into the bargain.

Then Boothby took me into his "study," the entire literary apparatus of which consisted of three phonographs; and he explained that, when he had dictated a certain amount of a novel into one of them, he handed it over to his secretary in another room, who set it going and transcribed what he had spoken into the machine; he, meanwhile, proceeding to fill up another record. And he concluded airily by saying with a laugh that he had a novel of 60,000 words to deliver in ten days, and was just on the point of beginning it!

Boothby's method was, I believe, somewhat unusual in those days. Since then it has become something like the rule. Not so much as regards the phonograph, perhaps, but with respect to the breathless speed of production.

A NOVEL IN A WEEK

I am informed by an editor, associated with magazines that use no less than a million and a half words of fiction a month, that he has among his contributors more than one writer on whom he can rely to turn off a novel of 60,000 words in six days, and that he can put his finger on twenty novelists who think nothing of writing a novel of a hundred thousand words in anywhere from sixty to ninety days. He recalled to me, too, the case of a well-known novelist who has recently contracted to supply a publisher with four novels in one year, each novel to run to not less than a hundred thousand words. One thinks of the Scotsman with his "Where's your Willie Shakespeare now?"

Even Balzac's titanic industry must hide its diminished head before such appalling fecundity; and what would Horace have to say to such froglike verbal spawning, with his famous "labor of the file" and his counsel to writers "to take a subject equal to your powers, and consider long what your shoulders refuse, what they are able to bear." It is to be feared that "the monument more enduring than brass" is not erected with such rapidity. The only brass associated with the modern best seller is to be found in the advertisements; and, indeed, all that both purveyor and consumer seem to care about may well be summed up in the publisher's recommendation quoted by Professor Phelps: "This book goes with a rush and ends with a smash." Such, one might add, is the beginning and ending of all literary rockets.

PRODUCTION UNDER HANDICAPS

Now let us recall some fiction that has been in the world anywhere from, say, three hundred years to fifty years and is yet vigorously alive, and, in many instances, to be classed still with the best sellers.

"Don Quixote," for example, was published in 1605, but is still actively selling. Why? May it perhaps be that it was some six years in the writing, and that a great man, who was soldier as well as writer, charged it with the vitality of all his blood and tears and laughter, all the hard-won humanity of years of manful living, those five years as a slave in Algiers (actually beginning it in prison once more at La Mancha), and all the stern struggle of a storm-tossed life faced with heroic steadfastness and gaiety of heart?

Take another book which, if it is not read as much as it used to be, and still deserves to be, is certainly far from being forgotten—"Gil Blas." Published in 1715—that is, its first two parts—it has now two centuries of popularity to its credit, and is still as racy with humanity as ever; but, though Le Sage was a rapid and voluminous writer, over this one book which alone the world remembers it is significant to note that he expended unusual time and pains. He was forty-seven years old when the first two parts were published. The third part was not published till 1724, and eleven years more were to elapse before the issue of the fourth and final part in 1735.

A still older book that is still one of the world's best sellers, "The Pilgrim's Progress," can hardly be conceived as being dashed off in sixty or ninety days, and would hardly have endured so long had not Bunyan put into it those twelve years of soul torment in Bedford gaol. "Robinson Crusoe" still sells its annual thousands, whereas others of its author's books no less skilfully written are practically forgotten, doubtless because Defoe, fifty-eight years old at its publication, had concentrated in it the ripe experience of a lifetime. Though a boy's book to us, he clearly intended it for an allegory of his own arduous, solitary life.

" I, Robinson Crusoe," we read, " do affirm that the story, though allegorical, is also historical, and that it is the beautiful representation of a life of unexampled misfortune, and of a variety not to be met with in this world."

" The Vicar of Wakefield," as we know, was no hurried piece of work. Indeed, Goldsmith went about it in so leisurely a fashion as to leave it neglected in a drawer of his desk, till Johnson rescued it, according to the proverbial anecdote; and even then its publisher, Newbery, was in no hurry, for he kept it by him another two years before giving it to the printer and to immortality. It was certainly one of those fruits " brought forth with patience " all round.

TIME AS A RESERVE FORCE

" Tom Jones " is another such slow-growing masterpiece. Written in the sad years immediately following the death of his dearly loved wife, Fielding, dedicating it to Lord Lyttelton, says: " I here present you with the labors of some years of my life "; and it need scarcely be added that the book, as in the case of all real masterpieces, represented not merely the time expended on it, but all the accumulated experience of Fielding's very human history.

Yes! Whistler's famous answer to Ruskin's counsel holds good of all imperishable literature. Had he the assurance to ask two hundred guineas for a picture that only took a day to paint? No, replied Whistler, he asked it for " the training of a lifetime "; and it is this training of a lifetime, in addition to the actual time expended on composition, that constitutes the reserve force of all great works of fiction, and is entirely lacking in most modern novels, however superficially brilliant be their workmanship.

For this reason books like George Borrow's " Lavengro " and " Romany Rye," failures on their publication, grow greater rather than less with the passage of time. Their writers, out of the sheer sincerity of their natures, furnished them, as by magic, with an inexhaustible provision of life-giving " ichor." To quote from Milton, " a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."

Of this immortality principle in literature Milton himself, it need hardly be said, is one of the great exemplars. He was but thirty-two when he first projected " Paradise Lost," and through all the intervening years of hazardous political industry he had kept the seed warm in his heart, its fruit only to be brought forth with tragic patience in those seven years of blindness and imminent peril of the scaffold which followed his fiftieth birthday.

The case of poets is not irrelevant to our theme, for the conditions of all great literature, whatever its nature, are the same. Therefore, we may recall Dante, whose " Divine Comedy " was with him from his thirty-fifth year till the year of his death, the bitter-sweet companion of twenty years of exile. Goethe, again, finished at eighty the " Faust " he had conceived at twenty.

Spenser was at work on his " Faerie Queene," alongside his preoccupation with state business, for nearly twenty years. Pope was twelve years translating Homer, and I think there is little doubt that Gray's " Elegy " owes much of its staying power to the Horatian deliberation with which he polished and repolished it through eight years.

If we are to believe Poe's " Philosophy of Composition," and there is, I think, more truth in it than is generally allowed, the vitality of " The Raven," as that, too, of his genuinely imperishable fictions, is less due to inspiration than to the mathematical painstaking of their composition.

But, perhaps, of all poets, the story of Vergil is most instructive for an age of " get-rich-quick " litterateurs. On his " Georgics " alone he worked seven years, and, after working eleven years on the " Æneid," he was still so dissatisfied with it that on his death-bed he besought his friends to burn it, and on their refusal, commanded his servants to bring the manuscript that he might burn it himself. But, fortunately, Augustus had heard portions of it, and the imperial veto overpowered the poet's infanticidal desire.

But, to return to the novelists, it may at first sight seem that the great writer who, with the Waverley Novels, inaugurated the modern era of cyclonic booms and mammoth sales, was an exception to the classic formula of creation which we are endeavoring to make good. Stevenson, we have been told, used to despair as he thought of Scott's "immense fecundity of invention" and "careless, masterly ease."

"I cannot compete with that," he says —"what makes me sick is to think of Scott turning out 'Guy Mannering' in three weeks."

Scott's speed is, indeed, one of the marvels of literary history, yet in his case, perhaps more than in that of any other novelist, it must be remembered that this speed had, in an unusual degree, that "training of a lifetime" to rely upon, as from his earliest boyhood all Scott's faculties had been consciously as well as unconsciously engaged in absorbing and, by the aid of his astonishing memory, preserving the vast materials on which he was able thus carelessly to draw.

Moreover, those who have read his manly autobiography know that this speed was by no means all "ease," as witness the almost tragic composition of "The Bride of Lammermoor." If ever a writer scorned delights and lived laborious days, it was Walter Scott. At the same time the condition of his fame in the present day bears out the general truth of my contention, for there is little doubt that he would be more widely read than he is were it not for those too frequent *longueurs* and inert paddings which resulted from his too hurried workmanship.

STORIES WHICH FIRST WERE LIVED

Jane Austen is another example of comparatively rapid creation, writing three of her best-known novels, "Pride and Prejudice," "Sense and Sensibility," and "Northanger Abbey" between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-three. Yet "Pride and Prejudice," which practically survives the others, took her ten months to complete, and all her writings, it has again to be said, had first been deeply and intimately "lived."

Charlotte Brontë was a year in writing "Jane Eyre," spurred on to new effort by the recent rejection of "The Professor," but to write such a book in a year cannot be called overhasty production when one considers how much of "Jane Eyre" was drawn from Charlotte Brontë's own life, and also how she and her sisters had been experimenting with literature from their earliest childhood.

Thackeray considered an allowance of two years sufficient for the writing of a good novel, but that seems little enough when one takes into account the length of his best-known books, not to mention the perfection of their craftsmanship. Dickens, for all the prodigious bulk of his output, was rather a steady than a rapid writer. He considered, says Forster, "three of his not very large manuscript pages a good, and four an excellent, day's work."

"David Copperfield" was about a year and nine months in the writing, having been begun in the opening of 1849 and completed in October, 1850. "Bleak House" took a little longer, having been begun in November, 1851, and completed in August, 1853. "Hard Times" was a hasty piece of work, written between the winter of 1853 and the summer of 1854, and it cannot be considered one of Dickens's notable successes.

George Meredith wrote four of his greatest novels in seven years, "Richard Feverel," "Evan Harrington," "Sandra Belloni," and "Rhoda Fleming" being produced between 1859 and 1866. His poem, "Modern Love," was also written during that period.

George Eliot was a much-meditating, painstaking writer, though "Adam Bede" cost her little more than a year's work. Her novels, however, as a rule, did not come forth without prayer and fasting, and, in the course of their creation, she used often to suffer from "hopelessness and melancholy." "Romola," to which she devoted long and studious preparation, she was often on the point of giving up, and in regard to it she gives expression to a literary ideal to which the gentleman with the contract for four novels a year, referred to in the outset of this paper, is probably a stranger.

"It may turn out," she says, "that I can't work freely and fully enough in the medium I have chosen, and in that case I must give it up; for I will never write anything to which my whole heart, mind, and conscience don't consent; so that I may feel it was something—however small—which wanted to be done in this world, and that I am just the organ for that small bit of work."

Charles Kingsley who, if not a great novelist, has to his credit in "Westward Ho" one romance at least which, in the old phrase, "the world will not willingly let die," was as conscientious in his work as he was brilliant.

Says a friend who was with him while he was writing "Hypatia":

"He took extraordinary pains to be accurate. We spent one whole day in searching the four folio volumes of Synesius for a fact he thought was there, and which was found there at last."

The writer of perhaps the greatest historical novel in the English language, "The Cloister and the Hearth," was what one might call a glutton for thoroughness. Of himself Charles Reade has said: "I studied the great art of fiction closely for fifteen years before I presumed to write a line. I was a ripe critic before I became an artist." His commonplace books, on the entries in which and the indexing he was accustomed to spend one whole day out of each week, cataloguing the notes of his multifarious reading and pasting in cuttings from newspapers likely to be useful in novel-building, completely filled one of the rooms in his house. In his will he left these open to the inspection of literary students who cared to study the methods which he had found so serviceable.

To name one or two more English novelists: Thomas Hardy's novels would seem to have the slow growth of deep-rooted things. His greatest work, "The Return of the Native," was on the stocks for four years, though a year seems to have sufficed for "Far from the Madding Crowd."

THE WAYS OF STEVENSON AND HAWTHORNE

The meticulous practise of Stevenson is proverbial, but this glimpse of his method is worth catching again. "The first draft of a story," records Mr. Charles D. Lanier, "Stevenson wrote out roughly, or dictated to Lloyd Osbourne. When all the colors were in hand for the complete picture, he invariably penned it himself, with exceeding care. . . . If the first copy did not please him, he patiently made a second or a third draft. In his stern, self-imposed apprenticeship of phrase-making he had prepared himself for these workmanlike methods by the practise of rewriting his trial stories into dramas and then reworking them into stories again."

Nathaniel Hawthorne brought the devoted, one might say, the devotional, spirit of the true artist to all his work, but "The Scarlet Letter" was written at a good pace when once started, though, as usual, the germ had been in Hawthorne's mind for many years. The story of its beginning is one of the many touching anecdotes in that history of authorship which Carlyle compared to the Newgate Calendar. Incidentally, too, it witnesses that an author occasionally meets with a good wife.

One wintry autumn day in Salem Hawthorne returned home earlier than usual from the custom-house. With pale lips, he said to his wife: "I am turned out of office." To which she—God bless her!—cheerily replied: "Very well! now you can write your book!" and immediately set about lighting his study fire and generally making things comfortable for his work.

The book was "The Scarlet Letter," and was completed by the following February, Hawthorne, as his wife said, writing "immensely" on it day after day, nine hours a day. When finished, Hawthorne seems to have been dispirited about the story, and put it away in a drawer; but the good James T. Fields chanced soon to call on him, and asked him if he had anything for him to publish.

"Who," asked Hawthorne gloomily, "would risk publishing a book from me, the most unpopular writer in America?"

"I would," was Fields's rejoinder, and after some further sparring, Hawthorne owned up.

"As you have found me out," said he, "take what I have written and tell me if it is good for anything"; and Fields went away with the manuscript of what is, without any question, America's greatest novel.

Turning to the great novelists of France, with one or two exceptions, they all bear out the theory of longevity in literature which I have been endeavoring to support. It must reluctantly be confessed that one of the most fascinatingly vital of them all, Alexandre Dumas, is one of the exceptions, born improvisator as he was; yet immense research, it needs hardly be said, went to the making of his enormous library of romance—even though, it be allowed, that much of that work was done for him by his "disciples."

George Sand was another facile, all too facile, writer. Here is a description of her method: "To write novels was to her only a process of nature. She seated herself before her table at ten o'clock, with scarcely a plot and only the slightest acquaintance with her characters, and until five in the evening, while her hand guided a pen, the novel wrote itself. Next day, and the next, it was the same. By and by the novel had written itself in full and another was unfolding."

Whether George Sand is still alive as a novelist, apart from her place as an historic personality, I leave others to decide; but I am very sure that she would be read a great deal more than she is if she had not so confidently left her novels — to write themselves. Different, indeed, was the method of Balzac, toiling year after year at his colossal task of "The Human Comedy," sometimes working eighteen hours a day, and never less than twelve, and that "in the midst of protested bills, business annoyances, the most cruel financial straits, in utter solitude and lack of all consolation." But then Balzac was sustained by one of those great dreams, without whose aid no lasting literature is produced, the dream, "by infinite patience and courage, to compose for the France of the nineteenth century, that history of morals which the old civilizations of Rome, Athens, Memphis, and India have left untold."

To fulfil this he was able to live, for a long period, on a daily expenditure of "three sous for bread, two for milk, and three for firing." But doubtless it had been different if his dream had been prize puppies, a garage full of motor-cars, or a translation into the Four Hundred.

A REAL AUTHOR IN CAPTIVITY

Victor Hugo, again, was one of the herculean artists working, in Emerson's phrase, "in a sad sincerity," with the patience of an ant and the energy of a volcano. Of his "Les Misérables"—perhaps the greatest novel ever written, as it is, I suppose, easily the longest—he said, "it takes me nearly as long to publish a book as to write one"; and he was at work on "Les Misérables," off and on, for nearly fifteen years. Of his writing "Notre Dame" (that other colossus of fiction) this quaint picture has been preserved. He had made vast historical preparations for it, but ever there seemed still more to make, till at length his publisher grew impatient, and under his pressure Hugo at last made a start—after this fashion:

"He purchased a great gray woolen wrapper that covered him from head to foot, he locked up all his clothes lest he should be tempted to go out, and, carrying off his ink-bottle to his study, applied himself to his labor just as if he had been in prison. He never left the table except for food and sleep, and the sole recreation that he allowed himself was an hour's chat after dinner with M. Pierre Leroux, or any other friend who might drop in, and to whom he would occasionally read over his day's work."

Daudet, whose *Tartarin* bids fair to remain one of the world's types, like *Don Quixote* or *Mr. Micawber,* for all his natural Provençal gift of improvisation and, indeed, from his self-recognized necessity of keeping it in check, was another strenuous artist. He wrote each manuscript three times over, he told his biographer, and would write it as many more if he could; and his son, in writing of him, has this truth to say of his, as of all living work: "The fact is that labor does not begin at the moment when the artist takes his pen. It begins in sustained reflection and in the thought which accumulates images and sifts them, garners and winnows them out, and compels life to keep control over imagination, and imagination to expand and enlarge life."

Zola is perhaps unduly depreciated nowadays, but certainly, if Carlyle's "infinite capacity for taking pains" as a recipe for genius ever was put to the test, it was by the author of the Rougon-Macquart series. Talking of rewriting, Prosper Mérimée, best known for "Carmen," is said to have rewritten his "Colomba" no less than sixteen times; as our Anglo-Saxon Kipling, it used to be told, wrote his short stories seven times over.

THE PAINSTAKING OF FLAUBERT

But, of course, the classical example of the artist-fanatic in modern times was Gustave Flaubert. His agonies in quest of the *mot propre,* the one and only word, are proverbial, and are said literally to have broken down his nerves. Mr. Huneker has told of him that "he would annotate three hundred volumes for a page of facts. . . . In twenty pages he sometimes saved three or four from destruction," and, in the course of twenty-six years' polishing and pruning of "The Temptation of Saint Anthony," he reduced his original manuscript of 540 pages down to 136, even reducing it still further after its first publication.

On "Madame Bovary" he worked six

years, and in writing " Salâmmbo," which took him no less time, he studied the scenery on the spot and exhausted the resources of the Imperial Library in his search for documentary evidences.

Flaubert may be said to have carried his passion for perfection to the point of mania, and it will be a question with some whether, with all his pains, he can be called a great novelist, after all. But that he was a great stylist and a master in the art of making terrible and beautiful bas-reliefs admits of no doubt.

To be a great world-novelist you need an all-embracing humanity as well, such as we find in Tolstoy's " War and Peace " —but that great book, need one say, came of no slipshod speed of improvisation. On the contrary, Tolstoy corrected and recorrected it so often that his wife, who acted as his amanuensis, is said to have copied the whole enormous manuscript no less than seven times!

Yes! though it be doubtless true, in Mr. Kipling's famous phrase, that

> There are nine and sixty ways
> Of inditing tribal lays,
> And every blessed one of them is right,

I think that the whole nine and sixty of them include somewhere in their method those sole preservative virtues of truth to life and passionate artistic integrity. The longest-lived books, whatever their nature, have usually been the longest growing; and even those lasting things of literature that have seemed, as it were, to spring up in a night, have been long in secret preparation in a soil mysteriously enriched and refined by the hid processes of time.

BALLADE OF PERFUMES

Haunting the air float perfumes of all time,
  Fantoms of nard anointing unknown kings,
Ghosts of the incense circling orient clime,
  Wraiths of the myrrh that clouded Nike's wings.
Cinnamon, aloes, champak—spicy things
  Strange to the nostrils freight each sunny ray:
To me more pregnant is the storm that brings
  The tang and tingle of the clean salt spray.

Jinn of the East, prevade our smoke and grime,
  Heavy with musk that wreathed the tombs of Mings,
Flaunting about our streets of nauseous slime
  Sandalwood, jinko's sacred offerings,
Swooning patchouli, fragrancy that clings—
  Seeking to drug our senses to their sway:
To me more potent is the spume that flings
  The tang and tingle of the clean salt spray.

Jasmine and rose have long been held sublime;
  Odorous rapture high in the orchid swings;
Out of exotic petal, leaf, and cyme,
  Lovely, alive, the clever pander wrings
Attars to tempt all vain soft overlings—
  Essenced delight for all with purse to pay:
To me all-priceless is the brine that stings,
  The tang and tingle of the clean salt spray.

ENVOY

Flora, although your wood-and-meadow springs
  Ravish and witch when flowered fresh by May,
How brief their spell: forever Triton sings
  The tang and tingle of the clean salt spray.

Richard Butler Glaenzer

THE MIRACLE MAN*

OR

NONE ARE SO BLIND

A NOVEL—COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

AUTHOR OF "GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN"

ILLUSTRATED BY E. M. ASHE

CHAPTER I

THE "ROOST"

HE was a misshapen thing, bulking a black blotch in the night at the entrance of the dark alleyway, like some lurking creature in its lair. He neither stood, nor knelt, nor sat—no single word would describe his posture—he combined all three in a sort of repulsive, formless heap.

The Flopper moved. He came out from the alleyway onto the pavement, into the lurid lights of the Bowery, flopping along knee to toe on one leg, dragging the other leg behind him—and the leg he dragged was limp and wabbled from the knee. One hand sought the pavement to balance himself and aid in locomotion; the other arm, the right, was twisted out from his body in the shape of an inverted V, the palm of his hand, with half curled, contorted fingers, almost touching his chin as his head sagged at a stiff, set angle into his right shoulder.

Hair straggled from the brim of a nondescript felt hat into his eyes and curled, dirty and unshorn, around his ears and the nape of his neck. His face was covered with a stubble of four days' growth, his body with rags — a threadbare coat; a shirt, the buttons long since gone at the neck; and trousers gaping in wide rents at the knees, and torn at the ankles, where they flapped around mismated socks and shoes.

A hundred, two hundred people passed him in a block, the populace of the Bowery awakening into fullest life at midnight, men, women, and children—the dregs of the city's scum—the aristocracy of upper Fifth Avenue, of Riverside Drive, aping Bohemianism, seeking the lure of the turkey-trot, transported from the Barbary Coast of San Francisco. Rich and poor, squalor and affluence, vice and near-vice surged by him, voicing their different interests with laughter and sobs and soft words and blasphemy.

Few gave him heed, and these few but a cursory, callous glance. The Flopper, in the shadow of the buildings, gave as little as he got, though his eyes were fastened sharply, now ahead, now screwing around his body to look behind him, on the faces of the pedestrians as they passed.

Suddenly the Flopper shrank into a doorway. From amid the crowd behind, the yellow flare of a gasoline lamp, outhanging from a second-hand shop, glinted on brass buttons. An officer, leisurely accommodating his pace to his own monarchical pleasure, causing his hurrying fellow occupants of the pavement to break and circle around him, sauntered casually by. The Flopper's black eyes contracted with hate, and a scowl settled on his face as he watched the policeman pass.

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The Flopper crossed the intersecting street, his leg trailing a helpless, sinuous path on its not overclean surface, and started along the next block. Half-way down was a garishly lighted establishment. When near this the Flopper began to hurry desperately, as from farther along the street again his ear caught the peculiar raucous note of an automobile horn accompanied by the rumbling approach of a heavy motor vehicle. He edged his way now, wriggling, squirming, and dodging between the pedestrians, to the outer edge of the sidewalk and stopped in front of the music-hall.

A sightseeing car, crammed to capacity, reaching its momentary Mecca, drew up at the curb; and the guide's voice rose over the screech of the brakes:

" Now, ladies and gentlemen, we will get out here for a little while. This is Black Ike's famous auditorium, the scene of last week's sensational triple murder! Please remember that there is no charge for admission to patrons of the company. Just show your coupons, ladies and gentlemen, and walk right ahead."

The passengers began to pour from the long seats to the ground. The Flopper's hat was in his hand.

" Fer God's sake, gents an' ladies, don't pass me by!" he cried piteously. " I could work once, but look at me now—I was run over by a fire-truck. God bring pity to yer hearts—youse have money fer pleasure; spare something fer me."

The first man down halted and stared at the twisted, unsightly thing before him. Then, with a little gasp, he reached into his pocket and dropped a bill into the Flopper's hat.

" God bless you!" stammered the Flopper, and the tears sprang, swimming, to his eyes.

The first man passed on with a gruff " Oh, all right," but he had left an example behind him that few of his fellow passengers ignored.

" T'ank you, mum," mumbled the Flopper, as the money dropped into his hat. " God reward you, sir—ah, miss, may you never know a tear—'twas Heaven brought you 'ere to-night, lady."

They passed on, following the guide. The Flopper scooped the money into a pile in his hat and began to tuck it away in some recess of his shirt when a hand was thrust suddenly under his nose.

" Come on, now; divvy!" snapped a voice in his ear.

It was the driver of the car, who had dropped from his seat to the ground. A gleam of hate replaced the tears in the Flopper's eyes.

" Go to hell!" he snarled through thin lips, and his hand closed automatically over the cap.

" Come on, now; I ain't got no time to fool!" prompted the man, with a leer. " I'm dead onto your lay, and there's a bull comin' along now—half or him, which?"

The Flopper's eyes caught the brass buttons of the officer returning on his beat, and his face went white with an inhuman passion as, clutching a portion of what was left in the hat, he lifted his hand from the rest.

" Thanks!" grinned the chauffeur, snatching at the remainder. " 'Tain't half; but it'll do," and he hurried across the sidewalk and disappeared inside a saloon.

Oaths, voicing a passion that rocked the Flopper to his soul, purled in a torrid stream from his lips and for a moment made him forget the proximity of the brass buttons. He raised his fist, that still clenched some of the money, and shook it after the other—and the fist was caught in a vicious grip—the harness bull was standing over him.

" Beat it!" rasped the officer roughly, " or I'll—hello, what you got here? Open your hand!"

He gave a sharp twist, the Flopper's fingers uncurled, and the money dropped into the policeman's other hand.

" It's mine — gimme it back!" whined the Flopper.

" Yours! Yours, is it?" growled the officer. " Where'd you get it? Stole it, eh? Go on, now, or I'll run you in! Beat it!"

With twitching fingers the Flopper picked up his cap, placed it on his head, and sidled away. Ten yards along, in the shadow of the buildings again, he looked back—the officer was still standing there, twirling his stick, one hand just emerging from his pocket. The Flopper's fingernails scratched along the stone pavement and curved into the palm of his hand until the skin under the knuckles was bloodless white and his lips moved in ugly, whispered words; then, still whispering, he went on again.

Down the Bowery he moved like a human toad, keeping in the shadows, his eyes on the ground before him, a glint, like a shudder, in their depths. Street after street he passed, and then at a corner he turned and went east—not far, only to the side entrance of the saloon on the corner known, to those who *knew*, as the " Roost."

The door before which he stopped might readily have passed for the entrance to one of the adjoining tenements, for it was innocent, to all appearances, of any connection with the unlovely resort of which it was a part—and it was closed.

The Flopper rang no bell. After a quick glance around him to assure himself that he was not observed, he reached up for the door-knob, turned it and, with surprising agility, hopped over the threshold and closed the door behind him.

THE FLOPPER'S HAT WAS IN HIS HAND

A staircase was before him; and this, without hesitation, the Flopper began to mount, his knee thumping from step to step, his dangling leg echoing the sound in a peculiar quick double thump. He reached the first landing, went along it, and started up the second flight, but now the thumping sound he made seemed accentuated intentionally and upon his face there spread a grin of malicious humor.

He halted before the door opposite the head of the second flight, opened it, wriggled inside, and shut it behind him.

" 'Ullo, Helena!" he snickered. " Pipe me comin'?"

The room, a fairly large one, gaudily appointed with cheap furnishings, was one of the Roost's private parlors. A girl on a couch in the corner had raised herself on her elbow and her dark eyes were fixed uncompromisingly upon the Flopper, but she made no answer.

The Flopper laughed; then a spasm seemed to run through him, a horrible, boneless contortion of limbs and body, a slippery, twitching movement, a repulsive, almost inaudible, clicking of rehabilitated joints, and the Flopper stood erect.

The girl was on her feet, her eyes flashing.

" Can that stunt!" she cried angrily. " You give me the shivers! Next time you throw your fit, throw it before you come around me, or I'll make you wish you had —see?"

The Flopper was swinging legs and arms to restore a normal channel of circulation.

" Y' oughter get used to it," said he with a grin. " Ain't Pale Face Harry come yet, an' where's the Doc?"

" Behind the ax under the table," said the girl tartly, and flung herself back on the couch.

" T'anks," said the Flopper. " Say, Helena, wot's de new lay de Doc has got up his sleeve?"

Helena made no answer.

" Is yer grouch painin' you so's yer tongue's hurt?" inquired the Flopper solicitously.

Still no answer.

" Well, go to the devil!" said the Flopper politely.

He resumed the swinging of his arms and legs, but stopped suddenly a moment later as a step sounded in the hall, and he turned expectantly.

A young man, thin, emaciated, with gaunt, hollow face, abnormally bright eyes and sallow skin, entered. He was well, but modestly, dressed; and he coughed a little now, as though the two flights' climb had overtaxed him. It was the man who had headed the subscription list to the Flopper half an hour before in front of Black Ike's auditorium.

" Hello, Helena!" he greeted, nodding toward the couch. " I shook the rubberneck bunch at Ike's, Flopper. That was a peach of a haul, eh, old pal—the boobs came to it as though they couldn't get enough."

A sudden scowl clouded the Flopper's face. He stepped to the table, reached his hand into his shirt, and flung down a single one-dollar bill and a few coins.

" Dere's de haul, Harry; help yourself." The invitation was a snarl.

Pale Face Harry had followed to the table. He looked first at the money, then at the Flopper, and a tinge of red dyed his cheek. He coughed before he spoke.

" Y' ain't going to stall on *me*, Flopper, are you?" he demanded in an ominous monotone.

" Stall!" The word came away in a roar too genuine to leave any doubt of the Flopper's sincerity or the turbulent state of the Flopper's soul. " Stall nothin'! De driver held me up fer some of it an' de cop pinched de rest."

" And you the king of floppers!" breathed Pale Face Harry sadly. " D'ye hear that, Helena? Come over here and listen. Go ahead, Flopper, tell us about it."

Helena rose from the couch and came over to the table.

" Poor Flopper!" said she sweetly.

" Shut up!" snapped the Flopper savagely.

" Go on," prompted Harry. " Go on, Flopper, tell us about it."

" I told you, ain't I?" growled the Flopper. " De driver called a divvy wid de cop comin', an' I had ter shell—an' wot he left de cop pinched. Dat's all." The Flopper's mouth was working again with the rage that burned within him.

Pale Face Harry, with pointed forefinger, gingerly laid the coins out in a row on the table.

" And you the king of floppers!" he murmured again softly. " It's a wonder you didn't let the Salvation Army get the rest away from you on the way along!"

Helena laughed, but the Flopper didn't. He stepped close to Harry and shoved his face within an inch of the other's.

" You close yer jaw," he snarled, " or I'll make yer map look like wot's goin' ter happen ter dat cross-eyed snitch of a guy dat did me—him an' de harness bull when I—" The Flopper stopped abruptly and edged away from the other. " 'Ullo, Doc!" he said meekly. " I didn't hear youse comin' in."

A man, fair-haired, broad-shouldered, immaculate in well-tailored tweeds, leaned nonchalantly against the door—inside the room. He was young, not more than twenty-eight, with clean-shaven, pleasant, open face—a handsome face, marred only, to the close observer, by the wrinkles beginning to pucker around his eyes and a slight, scarcely discernible puffiness in his skin. " Doc " Madison, gentleman crook and high-class con man, who had lifted his profession to an art, was still too young to be indelibly stamped with the hall-marks of dissipation.

His gray eyes traveled from one to another, lingered an instant on Helena, and came back to the Flopper.

" What's the trouble?" he demanded quietly.

It was Pale Face Harry who answered him.

" The Flopper's got it in for a couple of ginks that handed him one—a bull and a chauffeur on a gape-wagon," he grinned, punctuating his words with a cough.

Doc Madison shook his head and smiled a little grimly.

" Forget it, Flopper!" he said crisply, " I've something better for you to do. You fade away and lay low from this minute. I don't care what you do when you're resurrected, but from now on the three of you are dead and buried and the police go into mourning for at least six months."

" What you got for us, Doc? Something nice?" Helena pushed Pale Face Harry and the Flopper unceremoniously out of her line of vision as she spoke.

" Yes — the drinks. Cleggy's bringing them," Madison laughed, and opened the door as the tinkle of glass and a shuffling footstep sounded without.

A man, big, hulking, thick-set, and slouching, with shifty little black eyes and the face of a bruiser, his nose bent over and almost flattened down on one cheek, entered the room, carrying four glasses on a tin tray. He set down the tray and, as he lifted the glasses from it and placed them on the table, he leered around at the little group.

" Gee!" he said, sucking in his breath. " De Doc an' Helena an' Pale Face an' de Flopper! Gee! dis looks like de real t'ing —dis looks like biz."

" It does — fifty cents' worth — ten for yourself," and Doc Madison suavely flipped the coin into the tray. " Now clear out!"

" Say "—Cleggy put his forefinger significantly to the side of his nose—" say, can't youse let a sport in on—"

" Clear out!" Doc Madison broke in quite as suavely as before, but there was a sudden glint of steel in the gray eyes as they held the bruiser's, and Cleggy, hastily picking up the tray, scuffled from the room.

Madison watched the door close, then

he began to pace slowly up and down the room.

" Pull the chairs up to the table so we can take things comfortably," he directed.

" There ain't but two," grinned Pale Face Harry.

" Oh, well, never mind," said Madison. " Slue the couch around and pull that up—Helena and I will sit here on the head of it."

Still pacing up and down the length of the room, his hands in his pockets, Doc Madison watched the others as they carried out his directions; then, suddenly, as he neared the door, his hand shot out, wrenched the door open, and, quick as a panther, he was in the hall without.

There was a yell, a scuffle, the rip and crash of rending banisters, an instant's silence, then a heavy thud—and next Cleggy's voice from somewhere below in a choice and fervent flow of profanity.

Doc Madison reentered the room, closed the door, dispassionately arranged a disordered cuff, brushed a few particles of dust from his sleeves, and, this done, started toward the table—and stopped.

Helena had swung herself to the table edge and, glass in hand, dangling her neatly shod little feet, was smoking a cigarette, her dark eyes veiled by their heavy lashes; on the other side of the table Pale Face Harry coughed as, with sleeve rolled back, he was intent on the hypodermic needle he was pushing into his arm; while the Flopper, his eyes with a doglike admiration in them fixed on Madison, stood facing the door, a grotesque, unpleasant figure, unkempt, unshaven, furtive-faced, his rags hanging disreputably about him, his trousers with their frayed edges, now that he stood upright, reaching far above his boot-tops and flagrantly exposing his wretched substitutes for socks.

MADISON STARTED TOWARD THE TABLE—AND STOPPED

Doc Madison reached thoughtfully into his pocket, brought out a silver cigarette-case, and carefully selected a cigarette from among its fellows.

" Yes, Cleggy was right," he said softly, tapping the end of the cigarette on his thumb-nail. "You're the real thing—the real, real thing."

CHAPTER II

A NEW CULT

Doc Madison swung Helena lightly down from the table to the couch, sat down beside her, one arm circling her waist, and motioned the Flopper to a chair; then he leaned forward and watched Pale Face Harry critically as the latter carefully replaced the shining little hypodermic in its case.

"Harry," said he abruptly, "could you give up that dope-needle?"

"Sure I could—if I wanted to!" asserted the other defiantly.

"That's good," said Madison cheerfully. "Because you'll have to."

"Eh?" Pale Face Harry stared at Doc in amazement.

"Because you'll have to—by and by," said Madison coolly. "And how about that cough—can you quit coughing?"

"When I'm dead — which won't be long. D'ye think I cough because I like it? How'm I going to quit coughing?"

"I don't know," and Madison frowned seriously. "I only know you'll have to."

Pale Face Harry, with jaw dropped, accentuating the gaunt leanness of his hollow-cheeked face, gazed at the other with a curious mingling of incredulity and affront—and coughed.

"Say," he inquired grimly, "what's the answer?"

Doc Madison took his arm from Helena's waist, pulled a newspaper from his pocket, spread it out on the table, and his manner changed suddenly — enthusiasm was in his eyes, his voice, his face.

"I've steered you three through a few deals," said he impressively, "that have sized up big enough to keep you out of the raw vaudeville turn you, Harry, and you, Flopper, are so fond of, and that would have put Helena here on Easy Street, if you hadn't blown in all you got about ten minutes after you got your hands on it. But now I've got one here that sizes up so big you wouldn't be able to spend the money fast enough to close out your bank-account if you did your damnedest! Get that?

"It's the greatest cinch that ever came down from the gateway of heaven—and that's where it came from—heaven. It couldn't have come from anywhere else—it's too good. And it's new, brand new—it's never had the string cut or the wrapper taken off. It's got anything that was ever run beaten by more laps than there are in the track, and a purse tied onto the end of it that's the biggest ever offered since Adam. But you've got to work for it, and that's what I brought you here for to-night—to learn your little pieces so's you can say 'em nice and cute when you get up on the platform before the audience."

The Flopper's tongue made a greedy circuit of his upper and under lips and he hitched his chair closer to the table.

A flush spread over Pale Face Harry's cheeks, and his eyes, abnormally bright, grew brighter.

"You're all right, Doc," he assured Madison anxiously. "You're all right."

"U-u-mm!" cooed Helena excitedly. "Go on, Doc—go on!"

"Listen," and Madison lowered his voice a little. "I found this tucked away as a filler in a corner of the newspaper this evening. It's headed, 'A New Cult,' with an interrogation-mark after it. Now listen:

> "A NEW CULT?
>
> "Needley, Maine, offers no attraction for aspiring young medical men. One who tried it recently, and who pulled down his shingle in disgust after a week, says competition is too strong. The village is obsessed with the belief that they have a sort of faith-healer in their midst to whom is attributed cures of all descriptions, stretching back for a generation or more. The healer, he adds, who rejoices in the name of the Patriarch and lives in solitude a mile or so from the village, is something of an anomaly in himself, being both deaf and dumb. We—

"But that's all that interests us." Doc stopped reading and lifted his head to scrutinize his companions quizzically.

Pale Face Harry's eyes had lost their gleam and dulled—he gaped reproachfully at Madison. Helena's small mouth drooped downward in a disappointed *moue*. Only the Flopper evidenced enthusiastic response.

"Sure!" he chortled. "Sure t'ing! I see. De old geezer'll have a pile of shekels hid away, an' he lives by his lonesome a mile from de town. We sneaks down dere, croaks de guy wid de queer monniker, an' beats it wid de shekels—sure!"

Doc Madison turned a sad gray eye on the Flopper.

" Flopper," said he pathetically, " your soul, like your bones, runs to rank realism. No; we don't ' croak de guy '—we cherish him, we nurse him, we fondle him. He's our one best bet, and we fold him to our breasts tenderly and we protect him from all harm and danger and sudden death."

The Flopper blinked a little helplessly.

" Mebbe," said the Flopper, " I got de wrong dope. Some of dem words you read I ain't hip to. Wot's anymaly mean?"

" Anomaly?" Doc Madison reached for his glass, tossed off the contents, and set it down. " It means, Flopper, in this particular instance," he said gravely, " that there shouldn't be any interrogation-point after the heading."

Again the Flopper blinked helplessly and his fingers picked uncertainly at the stubble on his chin. The other two gazed disconsolately—and Helena a little pityingly as well—at Doc Madison.

The latter flung out his arms suddenly.

" What's the matter with you all? " he demanded sarcastically. " You look as though your faces pained you! What's the matter with you? You're bright enough ordinarily, Helena, and, Harry, you're no dub — what's the matter with you? Can't you see it? Why, it's sticking out a mile—it's *waiting* for us! The whole plant's there, and all we've got to do is get steam under the boilers. We'll have 'em coming for the cure from every State in the Union and begging us to let them throw their diamond tiaras at us for a look-in at the shrine. Don't you see it—can't you *get* it?"

Helena bent suddenly over Doc Madison's shoulder, her eyes opening wide with dawning comprehension.

" The cure?" she breathed.

" Sure—the cure. The new cult—that's us. Get the people talking, show 'em something, and you'll have to put up fences and ' keep off the grass ' signs to stop the lame and the halt and the blind and the neurasthenics from crowding and suffocating to death for want of air. We'll start a shrine down there that'll be a winner, and the railroads will be running excursion-rate pilgrimages."

Pale Face Harry's chair creaked as, like the Flopper, he now crowded it in toward the table.

" I get you!" said he feverishly. " I get you! I've read about them shrines—only you gotter have churches and a carload of crutches and that sort of thing laying around."

Doc Madison smiled pleasantly.

" Yes; you've got me, Harry, only we'll do the stage-setting a little differently. Mostly what is required is faith. Get them going on that, and everybody that's sick or near sick in this great United States, that's got the swellest collection of boobs and millionaires on earth, will swarm thitherward like bees—there won't be any one left in the sanatoriums but the bellboys and the elevator-men. Get them going, and all we've got to do is look out we don't let anything get by us in the crush—a snowball rolling down hill will size up like a plugged nickel alongside of a twenty-dollar gold piece when it gets to the bottom compared with what we start rolling."

" I've got you, too," said Helena. " But I don't see where the faith is coming from or how you're going to get them coming. You've got to show them — you said so yourself—even the boobs. How are you going to do that?"

" Well," said Doc Madison placidly. " We'll start the show with—a miracle. I haven't thought of anything more effective than that so far."

" A what?" inquired Pale Face Harry with a grin.

" A miracle," repeated Doc Madison imperturbably. " A miracle—with the Flopper here in the star rôle. The Flopper goes down there all tied up in knots, the high priest, *alias* the deaf and dumb healer, *alias* the Patriarch, lays his soothing hands upon him, the Flopper uncoils into something that looks like a human being, and the trumpets blow, the band plays, and the box-office opens for receipts."

Helena slid from her seat and, with hands on the edge of the table, advanced her piquant little face close to Doc Madison's, staring at him, breathing hard.

" Say that again," she gasped. " Say that again—say it just once more."

Pale Face Harry's hand, trembling visibly with emotion, was thrust out across the table.

" Put it there, Doc," he whispered hoarsely.

The Flopper, practical, lifted his right arm, wriggled it a little, and began to twist it around, as though it were on a pivot at the elbow, preparatory to drawing it in, a crippled thing, toward his chin.

Doc Madison reached out hurriedly and stopped him.

"Here, that'll do, Flopper," he said quietly. "You don't need any rehearsal to hold your job; you're down for the number and your check's written out."

"Swipe me!" said the Flopper to the universe. "I can smell de pine woods of Maine in me nostrils now. When does I beat it, Doc—to-morrer?"

Madison laughed.

"No, Flopper, not to-morrow, nor for several to-morrows; not till the bill-posters get through and the stage is dark and you can hear a pin drop in the house. I don't want you camping out and catching cold and missing any of the luxuries you're accustomed to, so I'll start along ahead in a day or so myself and see what kind of accommodations I can secure."

"Swipe me!" said the Flopper again. "An' to think of me wastin' me talent on rubber-neck carts!"

A puzzled little frown puckered Helena's forehead.

"I was thinking about the deaf and dumb man," she said slowly. "How about him, when we pull this off? Will he stand for it? And what'll he do?"

"Aw!" said Pale Face Harry impatiently. "He don't count! He'll have bats in his belfry, anyway, and if he ain't, he'll go off his chump for fair getting stuck on himself when he sees the stunt he'll think he's done. He'll be looking for the wings between his shoulder-blades and hunting for the halo around his head."

"Harry is waking up," observed Doc Madison affably. "That's about the idea, Helena. I haven't seen the Patriarch yet, but I don't imagine from his description that it'll be very hard to make him believe in himself. He doesn't stand for anything—we don't deal him any cards—he's just the kitty that circles around with the jack-pots while we annex the chips."

Doc Madison reached into his vest-pocket, took out a penknife whose handle was gold-chased, and very carefully cut the article he had read from the paper.

"Flopper," said he, "you've heard of gold bonds, haven't you?"

The Flopper's eyes gleamed an eloquent response.

"Only you've never had any, eh?" supplied Madison.

"Where'd I get 'em?" inquired the Flopper with some bitterness.

"Right here," and Doc handed him the clipping. "Here's a train-load and a bank vault full of them combined. Put it away, Flopper, and don't lose it. Lose anything you've got first—lose your life. It's worth a private car to you with a buffet full of fizz and Sambo to wait on you for the rest of your life. Get that? Don't lose it!"

The Flopper tucked the clipping into the mysterious recesses of his shirt.

"Say," he said earnestly, "if you say so, Doc, it'll be here when dey plant me."

"All right, Flopper. And now let's get down to cases. I've been able to pay my club dues lately, and there's money enough on deck to buy the costumes and put the show on the road. I start for Needley as soon as I can get away. When I'm ready for the support you three will hear from me, and, in the mean time, lay low. Nothing doing, understand? You'll get all the lime-light you want before you're through, and it's just as well not to show up so familiar when they throw the spot on you that even the school kids will know the date of your birth. See?"

The three nodded their heads with one accord.

"Give us the whole lay, Doc," urged Pale Face Harry. "And give it to us quick."

"Me mouth's waterin'," observed the Flopper, licking his lips again.

Helena lighted another cigarette and swung herself back to her perch on the head of the couch.

Doc Madison surveyed the three with mingled admiration and delight.

"The world is ours!" he murmured softly.

"Oh, hurry up and give us the rest of it," purred Helena. "We know we're an all-star cast, all right."

"Very good," and Doc Madison laughed. "Well, then, the order of your cues will depend on circumstances and what turns up down there, but we'll start with the Flopper now. First of all, Flopper, you've got to have a name. What's your real name—what did they decorate you with at the baptismal font back in the dark ages?"

The Flopper scrubbed at his very dirty chin with a very dirty thumb and forefinger.

"I dunno," said he anxiously.

"Well, never mind," said Doc reassuringly. "Maybe you are blessed above most people — you can pick one out for yourself. What'll it be?"

The Flopper's thumb and forefinger scratched desperately for a moment, then his face lighted with inspiration.

"Swipe me!" said he excitedly. "I got it—Jimmy de Squirm."

Doc Madison shook his head gravely.

"No, Flopper, I'm afraid not," he said gently. "That's another weak point in your interpretation of the rôle that I'll come to in a minute. We'll give you an Irish name by way of charity—it'll help to make your classical English sound like brogue. We'll call you Coogan—Michael Coogan. That lets you off with plain Mike in times of stress."

"Swipe me!" said the Flopper with perfect complacency.

"Glad it pleases you," smiled Madison. "Here's your lay, then. You've got to remember that you were born crooked, and—"

Helena giggled.

"I didn't mean it." Doc Madison's gray eyes twinkled. "You are waking up, too, Helena. I mean, Flopper, you've got to remember that you were born twisted up into the same shape you are in when you hit Needley. You come from—let's see—we'll have to have a big city where the next door neighbors pass each other with a vacant stare. Ever been in Chicago?"

"Naw! Wot fer?" said the Flopper. "Noo Yoik fer mine."

"Well, all right, New York it is, then," agreed Madison. "You're poor, but respectable, and that brings us to the other point. Before you go down there, Helena's going to start a little night-school with a grammar and teach you to paddle along the fringe of the great American language, so's you won't fall in and get wet all over every time you open your mouth."

"My!" exclaimed Helena. "Won't that be nice?"

"I hope so," said Doc dryly. "And don't run away with the idea that I'm joking about this — it goes. I don't expect to make a silver-tongued orator out of you, Flopper, and perhaps not even a purist, but I hope to eradicate a few minor touches of Bad Land vernacular from your vocabulary."

"I've gotcher—swipe me!" grinned the Flopper. "Me at school! Say, wouldn't that put a smile on de maps of de harness bulls an' de dips an' de lags doin' spaces up de river!"

"You won't laugh when I get through with you," remarked Helena, her eyes on the curl of smoke from her cigarette.

"There's just one more thing," went on Madison, "and I'm through with you, Flopper. Don't come down there looking like a skate—that's too raw. Get new clothes and a shave — and keep shaved. And from the minute you buy your ticket you keep your bones, or whatever a beneficent nature has given you in place of them, out of joint—see?"

"I'm hip," declared the Flopper, and the doglike admiration for Doc Madison burned in his eyes. "Say, Doc, youse are de—"

"Never mind, Flopper," Madison cut in brightly. "It's getting late. Now, Harry, about you. You've got a name, I believe. Evans, isn't it? Yes—well, that will do. Now don't kill yourself at it, but the more you work your dope-needle overtime before you start, and the harder you cough when you first land there, the better. We've got to have variety, you know. You're a physical wreck, with the folks back home sending the casket and trimmings after you on the next train in care of the station-agent."

"I guess," coughed Pale Face Harry, with a sickly smile, "I look the part."

"You certainly do," and Helena cheerfully beat a tattoo with her heels on the end of the couch.

"When the train whistles for Needley," Doc went on, "you put the soft pedal on the dope—that ought to help some. And then you begin to taper that cough off and become a cure, that's all."

"I ain't like the Flopper," said Pale Face Harry ruefully. "I told you once I can't stop the hack, and I ask you again how'm I going to?"

"Have faith in the Patriarch," suggested Helena innocently.

"You close your trap!" exclaimed Harry savagely; then to Madison: "Go on, Doc; it's up to you."

"No," said Madison coolly, "it's up to you. You've got to try, and if you can't stop altogether, you can make yourself scarce when you feel the fit coming on; you won't have to climb up on the grand stand and cough in peoples' faces, will you?"

"He might carry a screen around with him and cough behind that," volunteered Helena. "That's enough about the Flopper and Pale Face—what about muh? Where do I get off?"

"You?" said Doc Madison calmly. "Oh, you're a moral neurasthenic."

"And what's that when it's at home?" demanded Helena sharply.

Doc Madison threw out his hands in a comically helpless, impotent gesture.

"It's what we need to keep up the standard of variety," he said. "We're playing to the masses. Don't you like the rôle, Helena? It's the leading woman's."

"What do I do?" countered Helena non-committally.

"Do?" echoed Madison. "Why, you go down there like a whole parade and a gorgeous pageant rolled into one, in feathers and paint, and diamond boulders in your ears, and you come out of it in a gingham apron and coy sunbonnet as sweet sixteen."

"Oh!" said Helena, and her eyes were on the curl of smoke from her cigarette again.

"Say," cut in Pale Face Harry, evidently still worried about his cough, "we ain't going to have no easy cinch of this."

"No," said Madison with a grim smile; "you're not! It's going to be the hardest work any of you have ever done—you've got to lead decent lives for a while."

"Sure, dat's right," said the loyal Flopper; "but we stands fer anyt'ing dat de Doc says, an' dat goes!"

"It'll come hard on some of us," remarked Harry, with a sly glance at Helena, which met with contemptuous silence.

Madison leaned back, felt at his carefully adjusted tie, and smiled engagingly.

"Well?" he asked. "Can you see them coming?"

Pale Face Harry stared at him with a far-away expression in his eyes.

"When we get through with this, if I ain't handed in my checks before," he said dreamily, "it's mine for a brownstone on the avenue and one of them life-size landscapes with a shack on it that they call country cottages down to Pa'm Beach."

"Swipe me!" said the Flopper. "Me in me private Pullman in a plush seat an' anudder to put me feet on an' me thumbs in de armholes of me vest. I wears a high-polished lid an' a red tie an' scatters simoleans outer de window in me travels as I pass."

Helena went off into a peal of rippling, contagious laughter, and her little heels again beat an exuberant tattoo on the end of the couch.

"Yes?" invited Doc Madison, smiling at her.

"I'm seeing them coming," she said, and one heel went through the cretonne upholstery of the couch.

"Good!" and Madison pulled from the inside pocket of his coat a package of crisp, new, yellow-backed bills. "You understand that down there none of you ever heard of each other or of me before, and you drop the 'Doc'! My name is John G. Madison—G for Garfield."

His fingers passed deftly over the edges of the bills. He pushed a little pile toward the Flopper, another toward Pale Face Harry, and tucked the remainder into his coat-pocket again.

"That'll do for expenses," he said. "And now, if you understand everything, principally that you're to go to church Sundays till you hear from me, and you're quite satisfied with the lay, we'll adjourn, *sine die*, to Needley."

Helena was holding out a very dainty hand with pink, wiggling fingers.

"I'll need, oh, ever so much more than they will," she declared with a bewitching pout. "And, please, I'm waiting very patiently."

Doc Madison laughed.

"By and by, Helena," he said, patting her hand. "Well, Flopper, well, Harry, what do you say?"

The Flopper pushed back his chair and stood up hesitantly, like a man unexpectedly called upon for an after-dinner speech. He stood there awkwardly a moment, gazing at Doc Madison, his tongue slowly circling his lips; then, with a gulp, as though words to express his feelings were utterly beyond him, he turned and started for the door.

Pale Face Harry, as he rose, shoved out his hand.

"I don't deserve my luck to be in on this," he said modestly. "Only, Doc, push it along on the high gear, will you? I ain't going to be able to sleep thinking about it." He looked at Helena a little undecidedly, and compromised on brevity. "'Night, Helena," he flung out.

"Oh, good night, Harry," she smiled.

The Flopper turned at the door and came back a few steps into the room.

"Say, Doc," he said, blinking furiously, "youse can wipe yer feet on me any time youse like—dat's wot!"

Madison followed across the floor and from the doorway watched the two descend the stairs. "Good night," he said again, then closed the door and came back into the room. "Well, Helena?" he remarked tentatively.

"Well, Garfield?" Helena clasped her hands around one knee and rocked gently.

"Don't be familiar, Helena," Madison chuckled. "Is that all you've got to say?"

"I'm busy thinking about the Great American Play," she answered pertly. "There's one thing you forgot."

"What's that?" he asked, still smiling.

"The curtain on the last act," she said. "The getaway."

Doc Madison shook his head.

"Nothing doing!" he returned. "There's no getaway. It's safe—so safe that there's nothing to it. We don't guarantee anything, and there's no entrance fee to the pavilion — all contributions are strictly voluntary."

"That's all right," said Helena. "But, of course, we can't really cure them. We can get them going hard enough to make them think they are for a while, but after they've thrown away their crutches and got back home, what then?"

"Well, what then?" inquired Doc Madison easily.

"They'll yell 'fake!' and swear out warrants," and Helena's dark eyes studied the other.

"Not according to statistics," replied Madison, and his lips twitched quizzically at the corners. "According to statistics, they'll buy another crutch and come back to buck the tiger again. Say, Helena, to-morrow you go up to the public library and read up on shrines—they've been running since the ark. You never heard any howl about them, did you? What's the answer to those cures?"

"That's different," said Helena. "That's religion, and they've got relics and things."

"It's faith," retorted Doc Madison, "and it doesn't matter what the basis of it is. Faith, Helena, *faith*—get that? And we're going to imbue them with a faith that'll set them crazy and send them into hysterics. And talk about relics! Haven't we got one? Look at the Patriarch! Can't you see the whole town yelling 'I told you so!' and swapping testimonials hard enough to crowd the print down so fine, if you tried to get it all into the papers, that you'd have to use a magnifying-glass to read it once we've pulled off the miracle? Don't you worry about the getaway. If there's any sign of anything like that you and I, Helena, will be taking moonlight rides in the gondolas of Venice long before it breaks."

Helena choked and began to laugh deliciously.

Doc stared at her for a moment whimsically, then he, too, burst into a laugh.

"Oh, Lord!" he gurgled. "It's rich, isn't it?" And sweeping Helena off the couch and into his arms, he began to dance around and around the table. "Ring-around-a-rosy!" he cried. "We haven't done so bad in the misty past, but here's where we cross to the enchanted shore and play on jeweled harps with golden strings and—"

"Is that all?" gasped Helena, laughing and breathless, as at last she pulled herself away.

"No," panted Madison. "There's a table I've reserved up at the Rivoli that's waiting for us now. We're about to part for days and days, lady mine; that's the tough luck of it, but we'll make a night of it to-night, anyway—what?"

"You bet!" and Helena did a cake-walk toward the door. "Come on!"

CHAPTER III

NEEDLEY

"NEEDLEY?"

It wasn't wholly an interrogation — it seemed to Madison that there was even sympathy in the parlor-car conductor's voice as the other took his seat-check.

"Health," said Madison meekly. "Perfect rest and quiet—been overdoing it, you know."

"*Needley!*" The train conductor of the Bar Harbor Express, collecting the transportation, threw the word at Madison as though it were a personal affront.

The tone seemed to demand an apology from Madison — and Madison apologized.

"Health," he said again. "I've been ordered to cut out midnight oil and Broadway electrics."

"We're five minutes late now," grunted the conductor uncompromisingly and, to Madison, quite irrelevantly, as he passed on down the aisle.

Somehow this inspired Madison to consult his time-table. He drew it from his pocket, ran his eye down the long list of stations. Needley had an asterisk after it. By consulting a block of small type at the bottom of the page, he found a corresponding asterisk with the words: "Flag station. Stops only on signal, or to discharge east-bound passengers from Portland."

John Garfield Madison went into the smoking-compartment of the car for a cigar — several cigars — until Needley was reached, some two hours later, when the dusky attendant, as he pocketed Madison's tip, set down his little rubber-topped footstool with a flourish on a desolate and forbidding-looking platform.

Madison was neither surprised nor dismayed—the parlor-car conductor, the train conductor, and the time-table had in no way attempted to deceive him — he was only cold. He turned up his coat-collar and blew on his kid-gloved fingers.

As far as he could see, everything was white with a thin layer of snow. The landscape was disconsolately void of even a vestige of life; there was not a sign of habitation—just woods of bare trees, except the firs, whose green seemed out of place.

"I have arrived," said John Garfield Madison to himself, "at a cemetery."

There was a very small station, and through the window he caught sight of a harassed-faced, red-haired man. Madison watched the sole occupant of the platform apart from himself save his trunks from rolling under the wheels of the train; then his eyes fastened on a rickety wagon drawn by a horse that at first glance appeared to earn all it got.

The train left the platform—and left quite as uninviting a perspective on the other side of the track as had previously greeted Madison's restricted view. But now the man who had salvaged his baggage came down the platform toward him.

He halted before Madison and, reaching a mittened hand under his chin, reflectively lifted his whiskers to an acute angle, while his blue eyes over the rims of steel-bowed spectacles wandered from Madison to Madison's dress-suit case and back to Madison again.

"Be you goin' to git off here?" he inquired.

Madison smiled at him engagingly.

"Well," he said, "I wouldn't care to have it known, but if you can keep a secret—"

"Hee-hee!" tittered the other. "Now that's right smart, that be. Warn't expectin' nobody to meet you, was you? I ain't heerd of none of the folks lookin' for visitors."

"No," said Madison. "But there's a hotel in the town, isn't there?"

"Two of 'em," replied the other. "The Waalderf an' the Congress, but the Waalderf ain't done a sight of business since we got pro'bition in the State an' has kinder got run down. I reckon the Congress'll suit you best if you ain't against payin' a mite more, which I reckon you ain't, for I see you come down in the parler-car."

"And what," asked Madison, "does the Congress charge?"

"Well," said the other, "ordinarily it's a dollar a day, or five dollars a week, but this bein' off season an' nobody there, 'twouldn't surprise me if Walt 'ud kind of shade the price for you. Waalderf's three an' a half a week. Them your duds up the platform? I'll drive you over for forty cents. What was it you said your name was?"

"Forty cents is a most disinterested offer, and I accept it heartily," said Madison affably. "And my name's Madison—John Garfield Madison, from New York."

"Mine's Higgins," volunteered the other. "Hiram Higgins, an' I'm postmaster an' town constable of Needley. An' now, Mr. Madison, I reckon we'll just get these effects of yourn onto the wagon an' move along—folks'll be gettin' kinder rambunctious for their mail."

Hiram Higgins backed the democrat around, roped the baggage to the tailboard, picked up the hungry-looking mailbag, threw it down in front of the dashboard, and got in after it. Madison clambered into the back seat and they bumped off along the road.

"Had a mite of snow night before last," observed Mr. Higgins, pointing it out with the whip as he settled himself comfortably. "Kinder reckoned we'd got rid of it for good till this come along, but you can't never tell. What was it you said brought you down here, Mr. Madison?"

"WARN'T EXPECTIN' NOBODY TO MEET YOU, WAS YOU?"

Madison smiled.

"Rest and quiet—complete change," he answered. "Nervous breakdown, according to the doctors—that's what they always call it, you know, when they can't find any other name for it. I've been overdoing it, I suppose."

"Be that so?" returned Mr. Higgins sympathetically. "I want to know! Well, now, that's too bad! Lookin' for quiet, be you? Well, I reckon mabbe folks don't scurry around here quite so lively as they do in some of the bigger towns like Noo York, but there's a tolerable lot goin' on 'most every week — church festivals an' spellin'-bees an' such. Folks here is right hospitable, but you ain't in no way obliged to join in if you don't feel up to it. I'll explain matters to 'em, an'—"

Hiram Higgins stopped, excitedly gathered reins and whip into one hand, and with the other smote his knee a resounding whack.

"Well, I swan!" he exclaimed. "An' I never thought of it until this minute! I reckon you've come to just the right place, and just as soon as you get settled you go right out an' see the Patriarch—you won't need no more doctor, an' folks up your way won't know you when you go back."

"The Patriarch?" inquired Madison with a puzzled air. "Who is he?"

"Why," said Mr. Higgins, "he's—he's the Patriarch. Been curin' us folks around here longer'n any one can remember—just does it by faith, too."

Madison shook his head slowly.

"I might just as well be frank with you, Mr. Higgins," he said. "I've never taken much stock in faith-cure and that sort of thing."

"Mabbe," suggested Mr. Higgins deeply, "you ain't had much experience."

"No," confessed Madison reflectively, "I haven't—I haven't had any."

"Well, then, you just wait an' see," and Mr. Higgins waved his mittened hand as though the whole matter were conclusively settled. "You just wait an' see."

"But I'm afraid I don't quite understand," prodded Madison innocently. "What kind of cures does he perform?"

They turned a right-angled bend in the road, disclosing a straggling hamlet in a hollow below, and, farther away in the distance, a sweep of ocean.

"'Most any kind," said Mr. Higgins. "There's Needley now. All you've got to do is ask the first person you see about him."

"Yes," assented Madison; "but take yourself, for instance. Did this Patriarch ever do anything for you?"

"He did," said Mr. Higgins impressively. "An' 'twasn't but last week. I'm glad you asked me. For two nights I couldn't sleep. Had the earache powerful. Poured hot oil an' laud'num into it, an' kept a hot brick rolled up in flannel against it, but didn't do no good. Then Mrs. Higgins says: 'Hiram, why in the land's sake don't you go out an' see the Patriarch?' An' I hitched right up, an' every step that horse took I could feel it gettin' better, an' I wasn't five minutes with the Patriarch before I was cured, an' I ain't had a twinge since."

" It certainly looks as though there was something in that," admitted Madison cautiously.

Hiram Higgins smiled with a world of tolerance.

" 'Tain't worth mentionin' alongside some of the things he's done," he said deprecatingly. " You'll hear about 'em fast enough."

" What's the local doctor say about it?" asked Madison.

" There ain't enough pickin's to keep a doctor here, though some of 'em's tried," chuckled Mr. Higgins. " Have to have 'em for *some* things, of course — an' then he drives over from Barton's Mills, seven miles from here."

" And do *all* the people in Needley believe in the Patriarch?" Madison's voice was full of grave interest.

" Well," admitted Mr. Higgins, " to be plumb downright honest with you, they don't. Folks as was born here an' are old inhabitants do, but the Holmeses, bein' newcomers, is kinder set in their ways. They come down here eight years ago last August with new-fangled notions, which they ain't got rid of yet. You can see the consequences for yourself—got a little boy, twelve year old, walking around lame on a crutch—an' I reckon he always will. Doctor looks at him every time he comes over from Barton's Mills, but it don't do no good. Folks tried to get the Holmeses to take him out to the Patriarch's till they got discouraged. 'Pears old man Holmes kinder got around to a common-sense view of it, but the womenfolks say Mrs. Holmes is stubborner than all get-out, an' that old man Holmes's voice ain't loud enough to be heerd when she gets goin'. 'Tain't but fair to mention 'em, as I dunno of any one else that's an exception."

Mr. Higgins pointed ahead with his whip.

" See them woods over there beyond the town?"

" Yes," assented Madison.

" That's where the Patriarch lives," explained Mr. Higgins. " On the other side of 'em, down by the seashore. An' here we be 'most home. Folks'll be glad to see you, Mr. Madison, and now you're here, I hope you'll make a real smart stay—we'll try to make you feel to home."

" Thank you. I haven't any idea, of course, how long I'll be here—it all depends on circumstances."

" No," said Mr. Higgins; " I don't suppose you have. Anyway, I hope you'll take a notion to go out an' see what the Patriarch can do for you. An' now you ain't told me which hotel you're goin' to."

" Oh!" said Madison gravely. " Well, since you recommend it, I guess we'd better make it the Congress."

CHAPTER IV

THE PATRIARCH

" BET you a cooky," shrilled Hiram Higgins, in what he meant to be a breathless whisper, " that there's where he's goin' now, only he don't want us to know he's give in."

" Shet your fool mouth, Hiram!" cautioned Walt Perkins, the proprietor of the Congress Hotel. " He kin hear you."

" Get out!" retorted Mr. Higgins. " No, he can't neither. He ain't feelin' no ways perky, any one can see that, an' I'm tickled 'most to pieces that he's come 'round—I've took up with him consid'rable, I have. Patriarch'll just make a new-born critter outer him—you watch through the window where he goes. Bet you a quarter that's what he's up to!"

John Garfield Madison, outside on the veranda of the Congress Hotel, smiled at the words as he lighted his cigar and turned up his coat-collar. He stepped off the veranda, crossed the little lawn to the village street, and began to saunter nonchalantly and indifferently oceanward.

He did not look around—he had no desire to bring consternation to the massed faces of the leading citizens flattened against the window-panes—but he chuckled inwardly as he pictured them. There would be Hiram Higgins, postmaster and town constable; Walt Perkins, hotel man and town moderator; Lem Hodges, selectman, assessor, and overseer of the poor; Nathan Elmes, likewise selectman, and Cale Rodgers, school committteeman and proprietor of the general store.

Madison sauntered slowly along.

" I have arrived," he said, " not at a cemetery, but at an El Dorado and a land flowing with milk and honey."

There was a humorous pucker around the corners of Madison's eyes as he reviewed his two days' sojourn in Needley—spent mostly in the "office" of the Congress Hotel beside the stove, with his feet up on the wood-box. He had never lacked company—the office stove and the spit-box filled with sawdust was the admitted rendezvous of the chosen spirits who were still gazing after him from the window.

Morning, afternoon, and evening they congregated there, and he had been promptly admitted to membership in the select circle. At each sitting they had discussed the spring planting and the weather, and then inevitably, led by Hiram Higgins, had resolved themselves into an "experience" meeting on the Patriarch—he, Madison, as a minority leader of one, grudgingly conceding an occasional point. The sessions had invariably ended the same way—Hiram Higgins, with the back of his hand underneath his chin, would stroke earnestly at his chin-whiskers and remark:

"Well, now, Mr. Madison, 'twon't do you a mite of harm to go out there an' see for yourself. We've kinder got to look on you as one of us, an' there ain't no use in you sufferin' around with what ails you when there ain't no need of it."

Madison's replies had been equally void of versatility—he would shake his head doubtfully, while his cigar-case circulated around the group.

Madison sniffed luxuriously at his thoroughbred Havana. He had passed out of sight of the hotel window now, and he swung into a brisk walk. It was a mile to the Patriarch's by a wagon-track through the woods that led off from the road to the left just across the bridge. He had not needed to ask directions. With magnificent inadvertence Hiram Higgins had mentioned the exact way to reach the Patriarch's a dozen times, if he had once. Also, by now, Madison had learned all that the town knew about the Patriarch, which, after all, he reflected with some satisfaction, wasn't much.

The Patriarch was over eighty years of age, and he had come, deaf and dumb, to Needley sixty years ago — nobody knew from where, nor his previous history, nor his name. They had called him the Hermit at first, for immediately on his arrival he had gone out to the shore of the ocean, away from the village, and built a crude hut there for himself which, in the after years, he had made into a more pretentious dwelling. The cures had come "kinder gradual like, an' took the folks mabbe forty years to get around to believin' in him real serious," as Hiram Higgins put it; and then, as the Hermit grew old, and the local reverence for him had become more deep-seated, they had changed his name to the Patriarch. That was about all, but it seemed to suit Madison, for his smile broadened.

"I wonder," said he to himself, as he stepped onto the bridge to cross the little river, "if I'm not dreaming. This is like being let loose in the United States Treasury with nobody looking!"

"Hello, mister!" piped a young voice suddenly out of the dusk.

"Hello!" responded Madison mechanically, and turned to watch a small figure, going in the opposite direction, thump by him on a crutch.

Madison stopped and stared after the cripple and removed his cigar very slowly from his lips.

"That's that Holmes boy," he muttered. "I don't know as he'd look well on the platform when the excursion-trains get to running. Wonder if I can't get a job for his father somewhere about a thousand miles from here and have the family move!"

The cripple disappeared down the road and Madison resumed his way. Just across the bridge he found the wagon-track and turned into it. It ran through a thick wood of fir and spruce, and he found the going far from good.

Half curiously, half whimsically, he tried to visualize the Patriarch from the word-pictures that had been painted around the stove in the hotel. The man would be old, of course. And to have lived alone for sixty years, to have shunned human companionship, he must have been either mildly or violently insane to begin with, which would account for his belief in himself as a healer; he would unquestionably, in some form or other, "have bats in his belfry," as Pale Face Harry had put it.

Madison's brows contracted as he went along. A man living by himself under such conditions, with no incentive for the care of his person, not even the pride engendered by the association of others, crude as the standard might be in his vicinity, was apt to grow very shortly into a somewhat sorry spectacle. Give him sixty years of this, and add an unbalanced mind, and—Madison did not like the picture that now rose up suddenly before him—a creature, bent, vapid of face, deaf and dumb, frowzy of dress, and a world removed from the thought of a morning bath. It might be picturesque in a way, but it wasn't a way Madison liked.

Still reflecting, but arrived at no conclusion other than first to size up the Patriarch and see how best to handle him, Madison reached the end of the wagon-track—and halted.

It was a little lighter here, now that he had left the woods, and what appeared to be a sweep of snow-covered lawn was before him. Around this, forming a perfect square, was a row of full-grown, magnificent maples—a regal hedge, as it were, bordering the four sides—planted sixty years ago. Madison's imagination fired at the inspiring thought of these in leaf—in another few weeks. He shook hands with himself cordially.

"Behold the amphitheater!" he said. "This is where we stage the greatest act of the century!"

Behind the row of trees, directly across the lawn in front of him, loomed the dark shadow of a long, low, cottagelike building, and from a window a light twinkled out between the tree trunks; while from beyond again came the roll of surf, low, rhythmic, like the soft accompaniment of orchestral music.

"Wonderful!" breathed Madison. "I feel as though I had just had a drink!"

He walked across the lawn, passed between the trees, and reached the end of the cottage away from where the light showed in the window.

"The Patriarch being deaf," he remarked, "I might as well explore."

From the row of trees to the house was perhaps twenty feet. Everywhere Madison turned were trelliswork frames for flowers—the walls of the cottage were covered, literally covered, with bare, slumbering shoots of Virginia creeper. In a little while now the place would be a veritable paradise. Madison raised his hat reverently.

"Fancy this on a New York stage!" he murmured. "Could you beat it? I could play the Patriarch myself with this setting, and everybody would fall for it. There's nothing to it but his make-up — and I'll guarantee to take care of that. And now we'll have a look at Aladdin's lamp and see just what kind of rubbing will invoke the genie!"

Madison walked along the length of the cottage past the door and, as he reached the lighted window, drew well away from the wall and stared inside.

Surprise and incredulity swept across his features, then his face beamed and his gray eyes lighted with the fire of an artist who sees the elusive imagery of the great picture at last transferred to canvas, vivid, actual, transcending his wildest hopes. He was gazing upon the sweetest and most venerable face he had ever seen.

Here and there were strewn old-fashioned, round rag mats that would enrapture a connoisseur, and the floor, where it showed between the mats, was scrubbed to a glistening white. The furnishings were few and home-made, but full of simple artistry—a chair or two and a table, upon which burned a lamp. In a fireplace made of stones cemented together, the natural effect unspoiled by any attempt to hew the stones into uniformity, a log fire glowed, sputtered, and now and then leaped cheerily into flame.

Between the table and the fire, half turned toward Madison, sat the Patriarch. He was reading, his head bent forward, his book held very close to his eyes. Hair, a wealth of it, soft, silky, and snow-white, reached just below his coat-collar — a silvery beard fell far below his book.

But it was the face itself, no single distinguishing feature, neither the blue eyes, the sensitive lips, nor the broad, fine forehead, that held Madison's gaze—it seemed to combine something that he had never seen in a face before, and to look upon it was to be drawn instantly to the man. There was purity of thought and act stamped upon it with a seal ineffaceable, and there was gentleness there and sympathy and trust and a simple, unassuming dignity and self-possession—and, too, there was a shadow there, a little of sadness, a little of weariness, a background, a relief, as it were, a touch such as a genius might conceive to lift the picture with his brush into wondrous, lingering, haunting consonance.

Madison's eyes slowly, as though loath to leave the Patriarch's visage, traveled over the gray homespun suit that clothed the man, the white wristbands of the home-washed shirt, unstarched, but spotlessly clean, and his fancy of flowing, Grecian robes with rope girdles seemed to hold him up to mockery as a crude and paltry bungler before the perfect, unostentatious harmony of reality.

"There's nothing to it!" whispered Madison softly to himself. "Nothing to it! There isn't a thing left to do—not even a chance of making a bluff at earning the money—it's just like *stealing* it. Why, say, it would get *me* if I weren't behind the scenes—honest now, it would!"

Madison drew back from the window and walked toward the door of the cottage.

"It should take me about fifteen minutes to establish myself on the basis of a long-lost son with the Patriarch clinging confidingly around my neck," he muttered. "If it takes me any longer than that I'd feel depressed every time I met myself in the looking-glass."

He reached the cottage door and, lifting the brass knocker that shone dimly in the darkness, knocked once, lifted it to knock again—and his hand fell away as he smiled a little foolishly.

"I forgot the Patriarch was deaf," he muttered. "Wonder what you're supposed to do? Walk right in, or—"

The door swung suddenly wide open, and upon Madison's face, usually so perfectly at its owner's control, came a look of stunned surprise. The Patriarch was standing on the threshold and, with a gesture of welcome, was motioning him to enter.

CHAPTER V

A STRANGE CONVERSATION

Madison, quite in command of himself again, stepped, smiling, into the cottage. He took the Patriarch's extended hand in a cordial grip and nodded understandingly as the other, with quick, rapid motions, touched lips and ears to signify that he could neither hear nor speak. Inwardly puzzled, Madison searched the Patriarch's face—was the the other playing a part? Could he *hear*, after all — and, perhaps, speak as well, if he wanted to? There was certainly no guile in the venerable, gentle features—or was it guile of a very high order?

The Patriarch closed the door, and drawing his own armchair to the table, offered it to Madison with a courteous smile.

Madison refused by gently forcing the old man into it himself, pulled another up to face the Patriarch, sat down, and fixed his eyes suddenly on the ceiling above his head. Swaying slowly back and forth was a sort of miniature punka of waving white canvas. He studied this for a moment, then his eyes shifted to the Patriarch, who was regarding him humorously.

The Patriarch rose from his chair, walked to the door, opened it, moved the knocker up and down, and pointed to the ceiling. The canvas was waving violently now, and Madison traced the cord attachment, on little pulleys, across the ceiling to where it ran through the door and was affixed to the knocker without.

It was very simple, even primitive—every time the knocker was lifted the cord was pulled and the canvas waved back and forth. Madison nodded his head and smiled approvingly as the Patriarch once more closed the door and resumed his seat.

Madison leaned back in his chair and allowed his gaze to stray, not impertinently, but with pleased indorsement, around the room, to permit an unhampered opportunity for the scrutiny of the blue eyes which he felt upon him.

"And to think," he mused reproachfully, "that I could have doubted him for a single instant—he certainly hung one on me that time."

The Patriarch reached into the drawer of the table beside him, took out a slate and pencil, scratched a few words, and handed both pencil and slate to Madison.

"Your name is Madison, isn't it?" Madison read. "From New York? Hiram told me about you."

"Hiram," said Madison to himself, "is a man of many parts and the most useful fellow I have ever known. Hiram, by reflected glory, will some day become famous." On the slate he replied: "Yes; that is my name—John Madison. It was good of Mr. Higgins to speak of me."

The Patriarch held the slate within a bare inch or two of his face and moved it back and forth before his eyes to follow the lines. As he lowered it, Madison reached for it politely.

"I am afraid you do not see very well," he scribbled. "Shall I write larger?"

Again the Patriarch deciphered the words laboriously; then he wrote, and handed the slate to Madison.

"I am going blind," he had written. "Please write as large as possible."

"Blind!" Madison's attitude and expression were eloquent enough not only to be a perfect interpretation of his exclamation, but to convey his shocked and pained surprise as well.

The Patriarch bowed his head affirmatively, smiling a little wistfully.

Madison impetuously drew his chair closer to the other, laid his hand sympathetically upon the Patriarch's sleeve, and, with the slate upon his knee, wrote with the other hand impulsively:

"I am sorry—very, very sorry. Would you care to tell me about it?"

The Patriarch's face lighted up while reading the slate, but he shook his head slowly as he smiled again.

"By and by, if you wish," he wrote. "But first about yourself. You are sick, and you have come to me for help?"

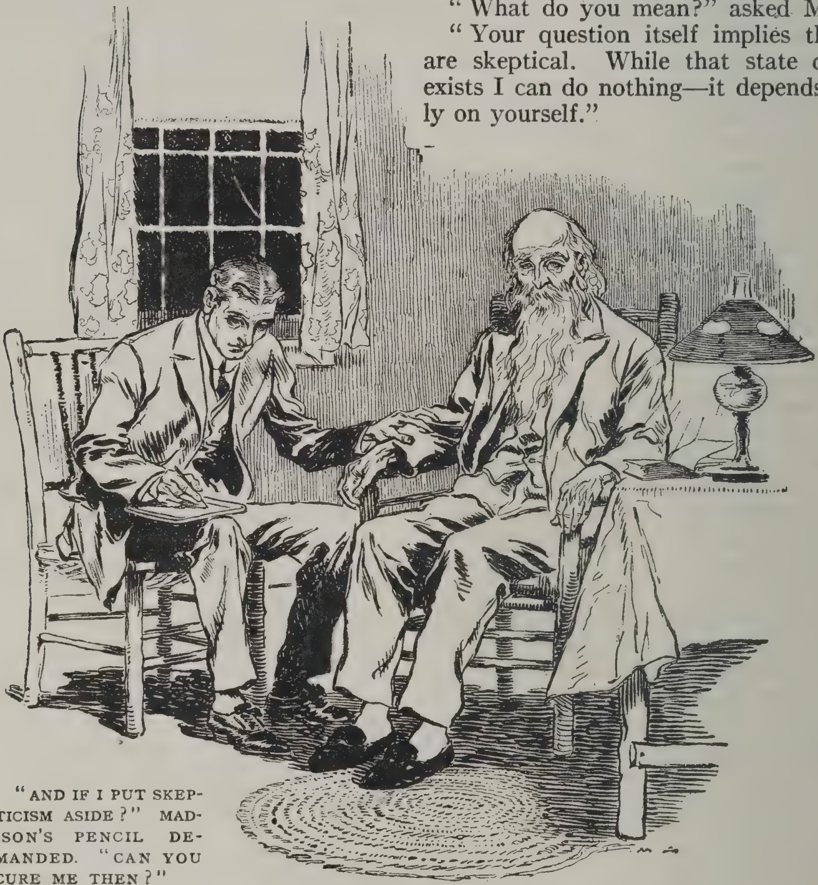
The slate now passed from hand to hand quite rapidly.

"Yes," wrote Madison. "Can you cure me?"

"No," replied the Patriarch; "not in your present mental condition."

"What do you mean?" asked Madison.

"Your question itself implies that you are skeptical. While that state of mind exists I can do nothing—it depends entirely on yourself."



"AND IF I PUT SKEPTICISM ASIDE?" MADISON'S PENCIL DEMANDED. "CAN YOU CURE ME THEN?"

"And if I put skepticism aside?" Madison's pencil demanded. "Can you cure me then?"

"Unquestionably," wrote the Patriarch, "if you really put it aside. Faith is the simplest thing in the world and the most complex, but it is fundamental. Without faith nothing is possible; with faith nothing is impossible."

Madison's gray eyes rested thoughtful and troubled on the Patriarch.

"I have never thought much about it," he replied upon the slate, after a tactful moment's pause. "But I believe that.

There is something here about the place, about you, that inspires confidence. I was prepared to cling to my skepticism when I came in, but I do not feel that way now. If only I knew you a little better, were with you a little more, I believe I could have the faith you speak of."

"How long do you remain in Needley?" the Patriarch wrote.

Madison got up from his chair, went slowly to the fireplace, and, with his back to the Patriarch, stood watching the crackling logs.

"The old chap's no fool," he told himself, "even if he is gone a little in one particular. He certainly does believe in himself for fair! Wonder where he got his education — notice the English he writes? And, say — *going blind!* Fancy that! Santa Claus, you overwhelm me; you are too bountiful, you are too generous—you'll have nothing left for the next chimney! Deaf and dumb—and blind. Really, I do not deserve this—I really don't—let me at least tip the hat-boy or I'll feel mean."

He turned gravely to the Patriarch, resuming his chair with an expression on his face as one arrived at a weighty decision after a mental battle with oneself.

"I will stay here until I am cured. I put myself in your hands. What am I to do?" he wrote quickly, and held out his hand almost anxiously for the other's assent.

The Patriarch smiled seriously as, after peering at the slate, he took the outstretched hand and laid his other one unaffectedly upon Madison's shoulder.

"Be sure, then, that I can help you," wrote the Patriarch cheerfully. "There is no course of treatment such as you may perhaps imagine. My power lies in a perfect faith to help you once you, in turn, have faith yourself—that is all. It is but the practical application of the old dogma that mind is superior to matter. You must come and see me every day, and we will talk together."

"I will come—gladly," Madison replied; and, taking the slate, carefully wiped off the writing—as he had previously wiped it off every time it came into his hands—with a damp rag that the Patriarch had taken from the table drawer.

"This slate racket is the limit," said Madison to himself, as his pencil began to move and screech again; "but I've got to get a little deeper under his vest yet."

He handed the slate to the Patriarch, and on it were the words:

"Won't you tell me something of yourself, how you came to live here alone, and your name, perhaps? I do not mean to presume, but I am deeply interested."

"There is never presumption in kindliness and sympathy," answered the Patriarch. "But my name and story are buried in the past—perhaps when I am gone those who care to know may know. I have not hurt you by refusing to answer?"

"No, indeed!" said Madison politely to himself. "The element of mystery is one of the best drawing cards I know—it's got Needley going strong. Far, far be it from me to tear the veil asunder. I mentioned it only as a feeler."

But upon the slate he wrote:

"Far from being hurt, I respect your silence. But your eyes—you were to tell me about them."

The Patriarch's face saddened suddenly as he read the words.

"I have made no secret of it," he wrote. "I have been going blind for nearly a year now. The end, I am afraid, is very near—within a few days, perhaps even tomorrow. I think I should not mind it much myself, for I am very old and have not a great while longer to live in any case, but for the time that is left it will mar my usefulness. I have been able to help the people here and they have come to depend upon me—that is my life. I trust I am not boastful if I say my greatest joy has been in helping others."

He had reached the bottom of the slate and held it out for Madison to read; then wiped it off, and went on:

"I have dreamed often of a wider field, of reaching out to help the thousands beyond this little town, but I have realized that it could be no more than a dream. I have been successful here because the people believe in me and have unquestioning faith in me — to go outside among strangers would only have been to be received as a charlatan and fakir, or as a poor deaf and dumb fool at best."

Madison took the slate.

"But if these thousands of others came to you—what then?"

The Patriarch's face glowed.

"It would be a wondrous joy," he wrote. "Too wondrous to dwell upon, because it could never be. If they came I could help them, for their very coming would be an evidence of faith—and faith alone is necessary. Think of the joy of helping so many others—it is the fulness of life. But let us not dream any more, friend Madison."

"Of course," communed Madison, studying the illumined face, "he's slightly touched in his upper story on the faith stunt; but he's in dead earnest, and he's got the brotherhood-of-man bug bad. Come to think of it, Hiram did say something about his sight failing, but I didn't think it was anything like this. If he's going to go finally blind in, say, a week, perhaps it would be just as well to postpone the opening night until he does."

Madison took the slate again.

"Stranger things than that have happened," he wrote. "I never heard of you before, yet I am one of the thousands beyond this little town, and I am here—why not the others?"

The Patriarch shook his head sadly.

"It is but a dream," he wrote.

Madison held the slate in his hands for quite a long time before he wrote again; his attitude one of sympathetic hesitancy as his eyes played over the form and face before him, while the Patriarch smiled at him with gentle, patient resignation. Back in Madison's fertile brain the germ of an inspiration was developing into fuller life.

"What will you do here alone when you are blind?" he asked, and his face was disturbed and solicitous as he passed the Patriarch the slate.

"I need very little," the Patriarch wrote back. "You must not worry about me. My garden supplies nearly all my wants, and there are many in the village, I am sure, who will help me with that."

"I am quite certain of it," Madison's pencil agreed. "But here in the house you cannot be alone—there are so many things to do, little things that I am sure you have not thought of—some one must cook for you, for instance. You will need a woman's hand here—have you no one, no relative that you can call upon?"

The Patriarch lowered the slate from his eyes, shook his head a little pathetically, and began to write:

"I do not think they would have cared to come, even if they were still alive; but they are all gone many years ago—except, perhaps, a grandniece, and I do not know what has become of her."

"Why, that's just the thing," wrote Madison. "Suppose we try to find her?"

Again the Patriarch shook his head.

"I am afraid that would be impossible. I do not even know that she is alive. I knew only of her birth, and that is twenty years ago."

"Even that is not hopeless," wrote Madison optimistically, and his face, as he looked at the Patriarch, was seriously thoughtful. "Where was she born?"

"New York," the Patriarch answered.

"And I never half appreciated the old town nor the fulness thereof until I came to Needley!" said Madison plaintively to the toe of his boot, while his hand scrawled the inquiry: "What is her name?"

"Vail," wrote the Patriarch. "That was her father's name. She is my grandniece on her mother's side. I do not know what they christened her."

Madison once more, apparently deep in thought, sought refuge at the fireplace, his hands plunged in his pockets, his shoulders drawn a little forward, his back to the Patriarch.

"Fiction," he assured a crack in the cement between two stones, "was never, never like this. It seems to me that I remember the occurrence. It has grown a little dim with the lapse of time, it is true; but now that I recall it, it comes back with remarkable clearness. I am quite sure they christened her Helena—Helena Vail! Now isn't that a perfectly lovely name for a novel! And she'll be so good to the dear old chap, too — washing and ironing and cooking for him—and stealing out into the wood-shed for a drag on her cigarette — *not*. No, my dear, not even that—this is serious business."

He turned, came back to his chair, picked up the slate, and wrote:

"I have the fortune, or misfortune, perhaps, to be what is commonly called a rich man. Money, they say, will do anything, and, if it will, I'll find this niece for you."

The Patriarch's eyes grew moist as he read the words, and his hand trembled a little with emotion as he held the pencil.

"I cannot let you do that," he protested. "You are very kind, and it seems almost as though you had been brought to me providentially at the end of long years of loneliness for a purpose, when my hour of helplessness was near; but, indeed, I have no right to allow you to do this."

"They tell me in the village," wrote Madison in reply, "that you have always refused to accept a penny for anything you have ever done for them. I have no doubt you would equally refuse to accept anything from me for what you may do, and I should hesitate to offer it, however much I felt indebted, but this is something that you must let me do. It will make me feel more—how shall I say it?—more as though I had a right to the privilege of coming here."

The Patriarch wiped his still moist eyes before he answered.

"What can I say to you? It does not seem right that I should let a stranger do so much, and yet it seems that I should not say no because—"

Madison was bending over the slate, reading as the other wrote, and he took the pencil gently from the Patriarch's hand.

"You must not look on me any longer as a stranger," he wrote. "Let us just consider that it is all arranged—only I would strongly advise making no mention of it until we make sure that she is alive."

"I think nothing should be said," agreed the Patriarch. "For, even if you found her, she might not care to come. I have little here to offer a young girl—few comforts—the care of a blind man who is deaf and dumb."

"We'll see about that when we find her." Madison smiled brightly at the Patriarch as he wrote. "Now that's settled for the time being, isn't it?"

The dumb lips moved and both hands reached out to Madison.

Madison took them in a firm, strong, reassuring clasp, then shook his finger in a sort of playfully emotional embarrassment, excellently well done, at the Patriarch, and picked up the slate again.

"It is getting late," he wrote, "and I must not tire you out. I am afraid you will think I am far more inquisitive than I have any right to be, but there is one more question that I would like to ask—may I?"

The Patriarch nodded his head and laid his hand on Madison's sleeve in a quaint, almost affectionate way.

"It is about your education. You came here sixty years ago, and you have lived alone. You could have had but few advantages, with your handicap, previous to that, and yet you write and use such perfect English."

"The answer is very simple," replied the Patriarch on the slate. "Until within the last year I have read largely. Would you care to look at my books? They are there in the nook on the other side of the fireplace."

Madison, promptly and full of interest, rose from his chair, passed around the fireplace, and halted before a row of shelves set in against the wall.

"I pass," Madison admitted to himself after a moment, during which his eyes roved over the well-chosen classics. "I've heard of one or two of these before—casually. They're what the fellows who review popular novels of about my size ring in, casually, to hold their own jobs down with—there's gentle graft in every game! I've an idea that if the Patriarch's got all this inside his gray matter, it's just as well for the Flopper, for Pale Face Harry, for Helena, and yours truly that he's deaf and dumb—and will be blind."

Madison came back to the Patriarch with beaming face and picked up the slate.

"I read a great deal myself," he wrote. "It is a pleasure to find *real* books here. May I, during my stay in Needley, look upon them, in a little way, as my own library?"

"You are very welcome indeed," the Patriarch answered.

"Thank you," wrote Madison. "And now, surely, I must go." He smiled at the Patriarch.

"Come to-morrow," invited the other. "I would like to show you all around my little place here."

"Indeed, I will," Madison scratched upon the slate. "And do you know that somehow, since I came here to-night, I feel a sense of relief, a sort of guarantee that everything is going to be all right with me in the future?"

The Patriarch smiled quietly, almost tolerantly.

"I know that," he wrote. "Keep your mind free of doubt; be optimistic and cheerful as regards yourself; nourish the faith that has already taken root and that I feel responds to mine; keep in the open air; and take plenty of exercise."

Slowly, with an apparently abstracted air, Madison read the slate, wiped it carefully, laid it down, and then held out his hand.

"Good night!" he nodded warmly.

The Patriarch, still with the quiet smile upon his lips, rose from his armchair and, keeping his clasp on Madison's hand, led his caller to the door, opened it and, with a gesture at once courtly and affectionate, bade his guest good night.

Madison crossed the lawn at a thoughtful pace, turned in to the wagon-track and, in the shelter of the woods now, whimsically felt his pulse; then, lighting a cigar, he tramped on with a buoyant stride.

"There's only one answer, of course," he mused. "The Patriarch's got a brain-kink on faith—it's the natural outcome of living alone for sixty years. Outside of that and his books he's as simple and innocent and trusting as a babe. I suppose the thing's kind of grown on him. Hiram said it had taken forty years, which isn't sudden unless you say it quick. Hanged if I don't like the old sport, though, and if Helena isn't the best ever to him I'll stop her chewing-gum allowance."

A little later he reached the main road and paused a moment on the bridge, as though to sum up the thoughts and imaginings that had occupied him on the way along.

"It's a queer world," said John Garfield Madison profoundly to the turbid little stream that flowed beneath his feet. "I wonder why some of us are born with brains — and some are born just plain damned fools!"

He went on again, arrived at the Congress Hotel and, discovering through the window that the leading citizens of Needley were still in session, negotiated the back entrance. On the way up-stairs he stumbled—quite inadvertently—and stopped to listen.

"There he be now," announced Hiram Higgins's voice excitedly. "Goin' up to his room to meditate. Knew he'd come back feelin' like that. I be goin' out there to-morrow to see the Patriarch myself."

Madison smiled, mounted the remaining stairs, entered his room, and lighted his lamp.

"Having got my hand in at writing," he remarked, "I guess I'd better keep it up and write Helena—Vail."

At the end of fifteen minutes he tilted back his chair, relighted the stub of his cigar, and critically read over his epistle, which ran:

Dear Kid:

Do not be anxious about me. I am feeling better already. Have had my first treatment, and am now eating fried eggs and ham regularly three times a day. A Sunday-school picnic taking to wash-boilers full of thin coffee and the left-over cakes kindly contributed by Deacon Jones's household is nothing to the way the boobs will take to the Patriarch, who has kindly consented to go blind to make our thorny paths as smooth as possible for us.

Do you get that, Helena?—he's going blind! In just a few days, my dear, you will be with me; have patience. The meteorological bureau is a little hazy yet on the exact date of the total eclipse, but it's due to happen any minute. Now listen. Your name is Helena Vail. You're the Patriarch's grandniece, and you're coming to live alone with him and soothe his declining years; but you can't come yet, because I've got to find you first, and besides, until he's blind he'll stick to a nasty habit he's got of asking questions on his little slate. You needn't have any hesitation about coming on the score of propriety; I assure you it is perfectly proper—he is running Methuselah pretty near a dead heat. And, as far as the town is concerned, apart from the fact that you are a grandniece, orphaned, you don't have to know anything about yourself, either—that's part of the Patriarch's dark, mysterious past, where the lights go out and the fiddles get rickets.

That's about all. I'll let you know when to come. Remember me to Mr. Coogan and Harry, and keep my picture under your pillow. Ever thine.

J. G. M.

Madison picked up his pen again and added another line:

P. S. Better buy a cook-book.

CHAPTER VI

OFFICIALLY INDORSED

Ten days had passed. The snow was gone, and the warm, balmy airs of springtime had brought the buds upon the trees almost to leaf. It seemed indeed a new land, and one now full of charm and delight—the desolate, straggling hamlet, once so barren, frozen, and hopeless-looking, was now a quaint, alluring little village nestling picturesquely in its hollow, framed in green fields and majestic woods.

Quiet, restful, peaceful it was, like a dream place, untroubled. Upon the farms about men plowed their furrows, calling to each other and to their horses; in the homes the doors and windows were thrown hospitably wide to the sweet, fresh, vernal air, and the thriftly housewives were busy at their cleaning.

And there had been other changes, too. The ten days had found Madison more and more a constant visitor, and finally a most intimate one, at the Patriarch's cottage—while to the circle in the hotel office his voice no longer rose in even feeble protest; he was one of them. And, perhaps most vital change of all, the Patriarch was nearly blind—so nearly blind that conversation now was limited to but little more than a single word at a time upon the slate.

It was morning, in the Patriarch's sitting-room, and Madison was seated in his usual place beside the table facing the other. For upward of an hour he had been engaged in telling the Patriarch that his grandniece had been found and that it was only necessary to write and ask her to come to Needley.

The Patriarch's fine old face was aglow with pleasure as he finally understood. Letter-writing was beyond him now, a thing of the past, so upon the slate he scrawled:

"You write."

Madison shook his head; and again with gentle impatience explained that perhaps it would be better if the letter came from some one holding an official position in the village rather than from one who, even in an abstract way, would be unknown to her—the postmaster, for instance.

And the Patriarch, patting Madison's sleeve gratefully, agreed.

Out in the garden behind the cottage, where for the first time in sixty seasons the work must be done by other hands, Hiram Higgins, the volunteer for the moment, was busy at his "spell."

Madison stepped to the door and called him in.

"Mr. Higgins," he said, "the Patriarch has just told me that he has a grandniece living in New York, and he wants you to write and ask her to come to him."

"Be that so!" exclaimed Mr. Higgins, gazing earnestly at the Patriarch. "Well, 'tain't no surprise to me—always calc'lated he must have folks somewheres. An' I'm right glad now he needs 'em he's made up his mind to have 'em come. Wants me to write, does he?"

"He can't write any more himself," said Madison. "He seems to think that you, as the postmaster, as well as the town police official, are the proper person to do it—and I quite agree with him."

"So I be," declared Mr. Higgins importantly. "I'll write it on the town paper, an' comin' from the postmaster, there won't be no doubt in her mind that it's any of them bunco games or the lurin' of young women away, such as I've read about, for I reckon perhaps she ain't never heerd of him before—never knew *him* to write a letter, an' I calc'late to see most everything that goes out. Where be her address?"

Madison stepped to the book-shelves out of view of the Patriarch around the fireplace, but in full view of Mr. Higgins, and, reaching down the Bible from the topmost shelf, extracted from inside its cover the aged, yellow slip of paper that he had deposited there when he had entered the cottage that morning, and on which was inscribed Helena's name and address in a stiff, old-fashioned, angular hand resembling the Patriarch's—an effect that Madison had stayed up half the night to produce.

"I guess this must be it," he said. "He said it was here—we'll make sure, though," and he handed it to the Patriarch.

Long and painfully the Patriarch studied it, anxiously deciphering the words he had never seen before, anxious to know whatever this might tell him about his niece—then he nodded his head and expressed his gratitude by patting Madison's sleeve.

Madison's smile modestly disavowed any thanks as he passed the slip to Mr. Higgins.

"Reckon that be it," Mr. Higgins agreed. "An' now I guess I'll go right back to town an' write it. I allow that the sooner we get her down here the better. Folks'll be glad to hear this—the women-folks was figurin' on takin' spells an' helpin' out in the house same as the men in the garden—'pears now there won't be no need of it."

Madison accompanied Mr. Higgins outside and helped him to harness up.

"Look here, Mr. Madison," he said, as he made ready to go, "would you allow that the Patriarch's goin' blind was goin' to interfere any with his power of curin' folks? It'll be a powerful blow to the town if it does."

"Why, of course not!" answered Madison decisively. "Certainly not! Indeed, I wouldn't be surprised if it enhanced his power — it's purely mental, you know. They say that the loss of any one or more of the senses generally tends to make the others the more acute. It's the—er—law of compensation."

"Glad to hear you say so," and Mr.

Higgins heaved a sigh of relief, " 'cause I got another letter to write 'sides this one for the Patriarch. It come last night, an' I was figurin' on speakin' to you about it."

Mr. Higgins dropped the reins on the dashboard and dived into first one pocket and then another.

" Shucks!" said he disgustedly. " Now if I ain't gone an' left it to home, after all. But I dunno as it makes much difference. It was from a fellow up your way by the name of Michael Coogan, an' was addressed to the postmaster. 'Pears he read a piece in the papers about the Patriarch, which he sent along with the letter. Allows he's been ailin' quite a spell, though he don't say what's the matter with him, an' wants to know if what's in that piece is all gospel truth, 'cause if 'tis he's comin' down. That's why I'm right glad to have heerd you say what you just said. Bein' postmaster, an' writin' 'fficially, I got to be conscientious and pretty partic'lar."

" Yes, of course — naturally," assented Madison. " And what are you going to say to him?"

" Why," returned Mr. Higgins, " there ain't no trouble about it now. Goin' to tell him that if the Patriarch can't help him there ain't nobody on earth can; thought of mentionin' your name, too."

" By all means," agreed Madison cordially. " I feel like a new man since I've come here. I only wish more people knew about the Patriarch—it makes your heart ache to think of the suffering and sickness that people endure so hopelessly when there isn't any need of it."

" Yes, so it do," said Mr. Higgins, picking up the reins.

Madison watched the democrat as it started off; then, smiling, he walked back into the cottage.

CHAPTER VII

THE PATRIARCH'S GRANDNIECE

It was Hiram Higgins who introduced Helena Vail to Madison two days later.

Madison had led the Patriarch outside the door of the cottage as the sound of wheels announced the expected arrival and was waiting for her as Mr. Higgins drove up in the democrat. Helena, marvelously garbed in the extreme of fashion, was demurely surveying her surroundings. A huge trunk and two smaller ones occupied the rear of the vehicle, with the dismantled back seat lashed on top of them.

Madison, leaving the Patriarch, hastened forward politely.

" Mr. Madison," said Hiram Higgins importantly, " this be the Patriarch's grandniece come to stay with him."

From under a picture hat Helena's eyes smiled down at Madison.

" Oh, I am so glad to meet you, Mr. Madison," she said cordially. " Mr. Higgins has been telling me about you, and how good you have been to my—my granduncle."

" You are very kind to say so, Miss Vail," responded Madison modestly. " May I help you down?"

She gave him a daintily gloved hand, exposed a daintily stockinged ankle as she placed her foot a little hesitantly on the wheel, and jumped lightly to the ground.

" That," she said quickly and a little anxiously for Mr. Higgins's ears, indicating the Patriarch, " that is my granduncle there, I am sure."

" Yes," said Madison, leading her toward the Patriarch. " And he has been looking forward very anxiously all day to your arrival — it seemed as though the afternoon would never come for him."

" Gee!" murmured Helena under her breath. " I had the rubes in the village on the run—you ought to have seen them stare as the chariot drove along."

" I don't wonder," said Madison softly. " The sun's rather strong down here, Helena, and if you're not careful you'll scorch your neck with those burning-glasses you've got in your ears."

" Don't I look nice?" pouted the girl.

" You bet you do!" said Madison earnestly. " You've got the swellest thing on Broadway beaten from Forty-Second Street to the Battery. Now, here you are," as they halted before the Patriarch.

The venerable face was turned toward them, as though by instinct the Patriarch knew that they were there, and his hands were held out in greeting.

Helena clasped them firmly, and submitted sweetly as the Patriarch drew her into his arms.

He released her after an instant, and his hands, in lieu of eyes, reaching out to search her face, came bewilderingly in contact with the picture hat.

Helena, a little uncertainly, looked at Madison.

"Is he *all* blind?" she whispered.

"Quite blind," replied Madison sadly.

Helena's face clouded a little, and into the brown eyes crept a strange, sudden, sympathetic look.

"Doc," she said, "it—it isn't fair. It's a shame—he can't fight back."

"One error to you, Miss Vail," said Madison pleasantly. "Eliminate the 'Doc.' Don't shed tears; you're down here to be sweet to him, aren't you? Well, get into the game."

Helena turned from Madison and, impulsively taking the Patriarch's groping hands, guided them to her cheeks and held them there.

"Lucky dog!" observed Madison; then, raising his voice: "I am sure you would like to be alone together, Miss Vail—perhaps you will take him into the cottage. If you will excuse me, I'll help Mr. Higgins with the trunks."

Madison turned and walked over to where Mr. Higgins, beside the democrat with a handful of chin-whiskers, was observing the scene.

"Fine girl!" declared Mr. Higgins, as Helena, with the Patriarch's arm in hers, disappeared inside the cottage. "'Pears she must have money, an' I'm right glad 'count of the Patriarch. Said her father an' mother was dead an' she was alone in the world. Them jewels she wore must have cost a pile. Reckon she's been used to livin' kinder different from the way folks down here do—hope 'tain't goin' to be so hard on her she won't want to stay."

"I was thinking about that myself," said Madison gravely, knotting his brows. "There's no doubt it will be a big change for her, but I imagine she had some sort of an idea what to expect—it is certainly greatly to her credit that she would give up her own interests unselfishly and come here to devote her life to the care of a relative whom she had never seen before. I've an idea that the girl who would do that is the kind of a girl who's got grit enough to see it through."

"So she be," assented Mr. Higgins heartily. "Ain't every one 'ud do it—not by a heap!"

They carried the large trunk between them into the cottage and, as Helena called to them, down the little hallway past what Madison knew to be the Patriarch's bedroom and stopped before the next door, which was open.

It wasn't luxurious, the little chamber, nor was there overmuch of furniture; a bed with a red-checkered crazy-quilt; a wash-stand with severe, heavy white crockery; a rocking-chair, home-made, of hickory; a rag mat, round, many-colored; and white muslin curtains at the windows.

SHE GAVE HIM A DAINTILY GLOVED HAND

It wasn't luxurious, the little chamber, but it was fresh and sweet and clean.

Upon the Patriarch's face rested a sort of pleased expectancy, and Helena promptly took his arm and pressed it affectionately.

"Isn't it perfectly dear of him!" she said softly. "To think of his going to all this trouble for me when he could scarcely see!"

"Well, 'tain't no more'n you deserve," remarked Mr. Higgins gallantly, as he slued the trunk around against the wall. "I'll lug them other trunks in myself; ain't but small ones, they ain't," and he hurried from the room, as though fearful that Madison might secure a share in the honors.

"I guess you've made a hit with Mr. Higgins, Helena," observed Madison with a grin.

"Have I?" returned Helena absently; then abruptly: "This is a real nice lay you've steered me into, John Madison."

"Yes; not bad," said Madison complacently. "Bring your uncle into the front room, Helena; and then you can get Hiram to show you the well and the old oaken bucket and where the pantries and cupboards are; he knows more about them than I do—it's pretty near time for you to be thinking about getting supper."

"Are you going to stay for it?" inquired Helena pertly.

"For the first attempt!" ejaculated Madison with a wry face. "Good Heavens, no! I'm just convalescing from a serious illness."

In the front room Madison settled himself to a study of the Patriarch's beaming, happy face, while Helena, under Mr. Higgins's guidance, explored the cottage.

"D'ye know, old chap," he said, and leaned across the table to touch the Patriarch's hand, "I feel like a blooming philanthropist. An outsider might think I was playing you pretty low and taking advantage of you, and even Helena's got a budding hunch that way it seems; but just think of the mess you'd have been in if it wasn't for me, just think of the good you're going to do, and just look at yourself and see how pleased and happy you look."

The Patriarch smiled responsively to the touch upon his hand.

Presently there came the sound of an ax busily at work, and a moment later Helena came laughingly into the room.

"He's filling up the wood-box," she explained, and darting across to Madison, put her arms around his neck.

"Aren't you going to tell me you're glad to see me?" she whispered coyly. "Oh, I've been longing so for you! Kiss me." She held out tempting little red lips, invitingly pursed up.

"Nix on that!" said Madison, smiling, but firm, as he disengaged her arms. "Soft pedal, Helena, my dear."

"But he can't see or hear."

"I should hope not!" said Madison with a gasp. "But you never know who else might, or when they might — we begin right, and run no risks—see? People have a charming habit of dropping around informally here—everybody's at home."

"Don't you love me any more?" inquired Helena, unconvinced.

"Of course I do!" laughed Madison. "Don't be a goose, Helena. You remember what I told you all in the Roost, don't you? Well, I haven't been living in a Maine village two weeks for nothing, and what I said then goes now more than ever. Now don't get sore, kid — there's a big stake up, and if we're going to play the game we've got to play it to the limit. We live perfectly, ultraproper, decent lives, mentally, morally, physically, till we beat it out of here for keeps."

"Ain't we going to have a nice time!" murmured Helena sarcastically.

"Oh, cheer up!" said Madison. "It may be quiet for a day or two, but not much longer than that. Now tell me about the Flopper and Pale Face before Higgins gets back—have they got things straight? And pat your uncle's hand while you talk, Helena—get the habit."

"I don't have to get the habit," and Helena perched herself on the arm of the Patriarch's chair and took his hand. "I think he's a perfect dear, and for us to sit here and take advantage of him when he trusts us is—"

"Now cut that out!" directed Madison. "Think of those gondolas in Venice when we get through with this — that'll make you feel better. Go on about the Flopper and Pale Face—can the Flopper speak any English yet?"

Helena laughed in spite of herself.

"I've had a dream of a time with him," she said. "He's broken his neck trying, at any rate; and he's not so bad as he was —quite."

"Good! Go on."

"I read them your last letter saying they were to come together and work the train on the way down," she continued. "The Flopper got the postmaster's letter, too."

"How did it size up as a testimonial?" inquired Madison.

Helena's dark eyes flashed with amusement.

THERE WAS A GROUP AROUND THE FLOPPER BESIDE THE BAR HARBOR EXPRESS

"Lovely!"

"Too thick—fishy?" asked Madison.

"Oh, no," said Helena, "not if you have faith—just strong. It's all right, though; I told him he could use it—it's a drawing card in itself, for some of them would be curious enough to get off and see the finish. Everything is all fixed—they'll be here tomorrow."

"Good girl!" said Madison approvingly. "We'll pull it off out there on the lawn where all the multitude can see—you'll have to lead his nibs out and guide him to the Flopper while the hush falls and you look kind of scared—you know the lay. There's no one can touch you when it comes to playing up to the house. And now there's just one thing more—you'll need some one around here to help you and keep an eye on the offerings when they begin to come in. Well, that's the Flopper's rôle in the second act — see? Overwhelmed with gratitude at his cure, he attaches himself to the Patriarch with doglike fidelity—beautiful thought!—get the idea? And—"

"Hush!" cautioned Helena. "Here's Mr. Higgins coming."

"All right." Madison rose. "I'm going now. Guess you understand. See you in the morning for the final touches. Tell Mr. Higgins I'm waiting outside for him to drive me home." He raised his voice. "Good afternoon, Miss Vail," he added, and stepped out on the lawn.

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH THE BAIT IS NIBBLED

THERE was a group around the Flopper on the Portland platform beside the Bar

Harbor Express; some wore pitying expressions, others smiled a little tolerantly. Pale Face Harry sneered openly.

"Nutty!" he coughed, and touched his forehead. "Nothing doing in the upper story—some one ought to look after him."

The Flopper, a crippled thing on the ground, fixed Pale Face Harry with a pointed forefinger.

"Youse don't look like you had many weeps to spare for anybody but yerself—ye're fallin' to pieces," said the Flopper. "I didn't ask you nor any of youse to butt in—I was talkin' to dis lady here."

He motioned toward a young woman in a wheeled invalid-chair who, between a trained nurse on one side and a gentleman on the other, was regarding him with a startled expression in her eyes.

She turned now and spoke to the gentleman beside her.

"Robert," she said in a low, anxious tone, "do you think that—that there can be anything in it?"

"Have you lost your head, Naida?" the man laughed. "The age of miracles has passed."

"But he is so *sure,*" she whispered.

"Poppycock!" said her companion contemptuously.

The Flopper, in good, if unfashionable and ready-made clothes, fresh linen, and a clean shave, turned a bright, intelligent face on the man at this remark.

"I guess youse are de kind," he said with a grim smile, "dat ain't had to kill yerself worryin' much about any kind of trouble, an' it ain't nothin' to you to cut de ground of hope out from another guy's feet an' let him slide. Mabbe you think I'm nutty, too, because I know I'm goin' to be cured—but it don't hurt you none to have me think so, does it? Mabbe some day you might like to hope a little yerself, an' if—"

"'Board! All aboard!" the conductor's voice boomed down the platform.

The young woman leaned forward in her chair toward the Flopper.

"I know what it is to hope," she said softly. "Will you come back into our car after a while? I'd like to have you tell me more about this. Please do."

"Sure," responded the Flopper amiably.

The crowd broke up, hurrying for the train; and the Flopper, dragging a valise beside him, jerked himself toward the steps.

"Swipe me, if I ain't got a bite already!" he told himself. "An' outer a private car, too—wouldn't dat bump you? An' say, wait till you see de Doc t'row up his dukes when he listens to me handin' out me sterilized English!"

The brakeman and a kind-hearted fellow passenger helped the Flopper into the train—and thereafter, for an hour or more, in the first-class coach the Flopper held undisputed sway. The passengers, flocking from the other cars, filled the aisle and seriously interfered with the lordly movements of the train-crew, challenging the conductor's authority with passive indifference until that functionary, exasperated beyond endurance, threatened to curtail the ride the Flopper had paid for and put him off at the next station—whereat the passive attitude of the passengers vanished.

The American public is always interested in a novelty, and on occasions is not to be gainsaid—the American public, as represented by the patrons of the Bar Harbor Express, was interested at the moment in the Flopper, and they passed the conductor from hand to hand—it was the only way he could have got through the car—and deposited him outside in the vestibule to tell his troubles to the buffer-plate.

The Flopper was in deadly, serious earnest; there was no doubt, no possible room for doubt on that score; one had but to look at the flush upon his cheeks and note the ring of conviction in his voice. Even Pale Face Harry's gibes and sneers melted before the unshakable assurance, and he became, with reservations, noticeably impressed.

A metropolitan newspaperman was struck with the idea of a humorous series of articles to pay for his vacation, entitled, "Characters I Have Met in Maine"; and forthwith, perched on the back of the seat behind the Flopper, proceeded to sketch out the first one, with the mental determination to get off at Needley for the local color necessary to its climax.

A soap drummer nudged a fellow whose line was lingerie.

"Ever do Needley?" he grinned.

The lingerie exponent had a sense of humor—he grinned back.

"My house is everlastingly rubbing it into me to open up new territory," added the soap salesman.

"Me, too," responded the white-goods man.

"Needley," said he of the soap persuasion, "would be virgin soil for any drummer."

"I'd like to see the finish," and the lingerie man still grinned.

"Well," inquired the soap man, "what do you say?"

"You bet!" retorted the man with eight trunks full of daintiness in the baggage-car ahead. "It's Needley for ours—you're on!"

The Flopper was an artist, and he was in his glory. Where his position became indubitably weak he side-stepped with the frank admission that he knew no more than they. He knew only one thing, and that was the only thing he cared about—he was going down to Needley to be cured—and he let them see Mr. Higgins's letter.

A porter from the rear car squirmed and wriggled his way down to the seat occupied by the Flopper.

"Mistah Tho'nton, sah," he announced importantly, "would like to see you in his private car, if you could done make it convenient, sah."

"Sure!" said the Flopper.

The passengers crowded up, standing on the seats and arm-rests to make room for the Flopper to crawl down the aisle, while the porter preceded him to open the doors.

Through the car in the rear of the one he had occupied, the regular parlor-car, the Flopper, a piteous spectacle, made his way; chairs turned, the occupants craned their necks after the deformed and broken creature, while smothered exclamations and little cries of sympathy from the women followed him along. The Flopper's eyes never lifted from the strip of carpet before him, but his lips moved.

"Gee!" he muttered. "Dis has de gape-wagon skun a mile. Wish I could pass de hat—I'd make de killin' of me young life. Pipe de hydrogen hair on de gran'mother wid de sparkler on her thumb an' weeps in her eyes, an' look at de guy wid de yellow gloves rolled back on his wrists to heighten de intellygint look on his face dat she's kiddin'—I could play dem to a fare-thee-well if I only had de chanst. Oh, gee!" the Flopper sighed, "an' I got to let it go!"

With regret still poignantly affecting him, the Flopper passed on into the private car. The young woman who had spoken to him at Portland reclined on a couch; the nurse sat at its foot, and the man was tilted back in an armchair against the window.

The young woman raised herself to a sitting posture and held out her hand.

"I am Mrs. Thornton," she said with a smile. "This is my husband, and this is Miss Harvey, my nurse. It was very good of you to come, Mr— " she paused invitingly.

"Coogan," supplied the Flopper. "Michael Coogan."

"Let me offer you a chair, Mr. Coogan," said Thornton a little ironically, pushing one toward the Flopper. "Or would you be more comfortable on the floor?"

The Flopper's eyelids fell, covering a quick, ugly glint.

"T'anks!" he murmured, and swung himself by his arms into the chair.

"I want you to tell me all about this strange man in Needley, and how you came to hear of him," requested Mrs. Thornton. "I was only able to get just the barest outline of it out there on the platform with the crowd around."

"Dat's easy," said the Flopper earnestly. "Sure I'll tell you. I saw a piece about dis Patriarch in one of de Noo Yoik papers, so I writes to de postmaster of de town to find out if he was on de level—see?"

"Yes," put in Mrs. Thornton eagerly. "And what did the postmaster say?"

The Flopper took Hiram Higgins's letter from his pocket.

"Youse can read it fer yerself, mum," he said with an air of one delivering a final and irrefutable argument.

Mrs. Thornton read the letter carefully, almost anxiously.

"If only a part of this is true," she said wistfully, passing it to her husband, "it is perfectly wonderful."

Mr. Thornton read it with a grin.

"I don't know, I am sure," he observed caustically, handing the letter to Miss Harvey, "how the medical profession would stand on this. Would your school indorse it, nurse?"

Miss Harvey read it with her back to the others, then she glanced at Mrs. Thornton and checked herself as she was about to speak. She folded the letter slowly and returned it to the Flopper without comment.

Robert Thornton, master of millions, hard-headed and practical, leaned forward in his chair toward the Flopper.

"Look here," he said bluntly, "you don't mean to say that you believe this seriously, do you?"

"Oh, no!" rejoined the Flopper softly. "Nothin' like dat! Of course I don't believe it! I'm only guyin' myself—see? I'm just goin' dere fer fun—an' spendin' me last red to get dere. Say"—his voice snapped—"wot do youse t'ink I am, anyway?"

"Surely, Robert," said Mrs. Thornton gently, "it is evident enough that he believes it."

Thornton did not look at her; he was still gazing at the Flopper, his brows knit.

"How long have you been like this?" he demanded sharply.

"All me life," replied the Flopper. "I was born dat way."

"And you expect to go down here and by some means, which I must confess is quite beyond my ability to grasp, be cured in a miraculous manner?" Thornton smiled tolerantly.

"Sure I do!" asserted the Flopper doggedly. "If he's done it fer de crowd dere, why can't he do it fer me? Didn't de postmaster say all yer gotter have is faith? Well, I got de faith—an' I got it hard enough to stake all I got on it. Dis time to-morrow — say, dis time to-morrow I wouldn't change places wid any man in de United States."

Thornton's tolerant smile deepened.

"I guess you're sincere enough," he said; "and I'm not trying to cut the ground of hope out from under your feet, as you put it out on the platform; but it seems to me that it is only the kindly thing to do to warn you that the more faith you put in a thing like this the worse you are making it for yourself—you are laying up a bitter disappointment in store than can only make your present misfortune the more unbearable."

The Flopper shook his head.

"If he's done it fer others, he can do it fer me," he repeated with unshaken conviction. "An' dat goes—I can't lose."

Thornton tilted his chair back again and stared at the Flopper with pitying incredulity.

There was silence for a moment; then Mrs. Thornton spoke.

"Robert," she said slowly, "I want to stop at Needley."

The front legs of Thornton's chair came down on the heavy carpet with a dull thud and he whirled around in his seat to stare at his wife.

"You don't mean to say, Naida," he gasped, "that you've got faith in this thing, too!"

"No; not faith," she answered pathetically. "I hardly dare to *hope*. I have hoped so much in the last year, and—"

"But this is sheer nonsense!" Thornton broke in with irritable impatience. "I can understand this man here, in a way—he has the superstition, if you like to call it that, due to lack of education, if he'll pardon my saying so in his presence; but you, Naida; surely you can't take any stock in it!"

She smiled at him a little wanly.

"I have told you that I didn't even dare to hope," she said. "But I want to see—I want to see. I have tried sanatoriums and consulted specialists until it has all become a nightmare to me and I am no better. I sometimes think I never shall be any better."

"But," exploded Thornton, rising from his chair, "that's nothing to do with this—this is rank foolishness! Nurse, you—"

Miss Harvey, too, had risen, and was regarding Mrs. Thornton anxiously.

"It is better to humor her than to excite her," she said in a low voice.

Mrs. Thornton had dropped back on the couch and her face was turned away from the others, but she stretched out her hand to her husband.

"I am not asking very much, Robert, dear—am I?" she said. "Not very much. Won't you do this for me?"

Thornton bit his lips and scowled at the Flopper.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he muttered, and moving to the side of the car, pushed a bell-button viciously. "Sam," he snapped, as his colored man appeared, "go and tell the conductor that I want my car put off on the siding at Needley."

"Yes, sah," said Sam.

Thornton sat down again heavily.

"Mabbe," announced the Flopper tactfully, "mabbe I'd better be gettin' back to get me valise—we're most dere, ain't we?"

Mrs. Thornton turned toward him.

"No; please don't go, Mr. Coogan—it's too hard for you to get through the train. Sam will get your things as soon as he comes back. Do stay right where you are until we reach Needley."

"No; don't think of going, Mr. Coogan," added Thornton savagely.

The Flopper looked at Mrs. Thornton gratefully and at Mr. Thornton thoughtfully.

"T'anks!" he said pleasantly, and wriggled himself into a more comfortable position in his chair.

Half an hour later the train that stopped only on signal to discharge east-bound passengers from Portland drew up at Needley—and Hiram Higgins, on the platform, stared at a scene never before witnessed in the history of the town.

It was not one passenger, or two, or three, that alighted—they streamed in a bewildering fashion from every vestibule of every car. It is true that the majority got back into the train later, but that did not lessen the effect any on Mr. Higgins. His jaw dropped, and he grabbed at his chin-whiskers for support.

"Merciful daylights!" he breathed heavily. "Now what in the land's sakes be it all about?"

His eyes, following the hurrying passengers, fixed on the twisted shape of the Flopper being helped to the platform from the private car.

"Three cheers for Coogan!" yelled some excitable passenger.

The cheers were given with a will.

"Good luck to you, Coogan!" shouted another, and the crowd took it up in chorus: "Good luck to you, Coogan!"

"*Coogan!*" Mr. Higgins's face paled and he took a firmer grip on his whiskers. "Now if you ain't gone an' put your fool foot in it, Hiram Higgins," he said miserably. "If that there's the fellow that you writ to, you've just laid out to make a plumb fool of the Patriarch, 'cause I reckon the Almighty knew His mind when He made a critter like that, an' didn't calc'late to have His work upsot much this side of the grave—not even by the Patriarch."

CHAPTER IX

THE PILGRIMAGE

FAITH is an inheritance common to the human race; and the human race, in its daily life, man to man, could not go on without it; but faith is a matter of degree. Faith, in the abstract, is inborn in every soul; and while dormant until put to a crucial test along any given line, is boundless and unlimited—a sort of tacitly accepted, existing state, unquestioned. Faith in many is a sturdy, virile thing—to a certain point. It is the fire that proves.

Needley had faith in the Patriarch—a faith that never before had been questioned. But Needley had more than that—Needley held the Patriarch in affection as a cherished thing, almost sacredly, almost as an idol. Faith the simple people of Needley had always had—to a certain point—but it faltered before this grotesque, inhuman, twisted shape that squatted in the road before the Congress Hotel like a hideous caricature of an abnormal toad. Their faith failed to bridge the span that gave the Patriarch power over such as this, and they saw their idol shattered in their own eyes and held up to mockery before the gaze of these strangers who had so suddenly swarmed upon them.

Hiram Higgins, seeking out Doc Madison inside the hotel, was in a state bordering on distraction.

"I druve him over from the station 'cause he couldn't walk, him an' a man an' two women an' a wheel-chair," Mr. Higgins explained. "But what's to be done now? He wants me to drive him out to the Patriarch's. I got faith in the Patriarch, but I never said he could work miracles; there ain't no one on earth could straighten that critter out. Don't stand to reason that the Patriarch's to be made a fool of."

"Certainly not," agreed Madison emphatically. "It's most unfortunate. I suppose all of us here in Needley"—he looked around at the assembled group of leading citizens—"feel the same way, too?"

"Of course we do," said Mr. Higgins helplessly. "Couldn't feel no ways else."

Madison laid his hand impressively upon Mr. Higgins's shoulder and looked meaningly into Mr. Higgins's eyes.

"Don't drive him over, then," he directed significantly. "Don't any of the rest of you do it either—and tell everybody else not to. Make him *crawl*. If he's determined to go, let him get there by himself if he can; make him crawl—he'll never be able to do it."

"That's so," said Mr. Higgins, brightening, while the others nodded; then, dubiously: "But s'pose he *does* get there—how be we goin' to stop him?"

" If he can get there by himself you can't stop him," said Madison seriously. " You can't do anything like that. To use force would be carrying things too far, and would only place the Patriarch in a worse light. If this fellow—what's his name?—Coogan?—can crawl there, let him—that's his own business. None of *us* are encouraging him, the Patriarch didn't ask him to come, and no one has a right to expect miracles—so it can't hurt the Patriarch seriously under those conditions. Besides, if this Coogan has got faith enough to crawl that mile, who knows what might happen?—make him crawl."

Mr. Higgins, with a grim nod, headed a determined exodus from the hotel, and Madison strolled out on the veranda.

Needley was in a furor. The news spread like an oil-fed conflagration. The farmers left their work in the fields and hurried into the village; from the houses and cottages came the women and children to cluster around the Congress Hotel; from the station, scarcely of less interest than the Flopper himself, straggled in those curious enough to have left the train, nearly a dozen of them, and among them Pale Face Harry coughed as he trudged laboriously along.

Larger and larger grew the circle around the Flopper, filling and blocking the road, overflowing into front yards, and massing on the little lawn of the hotel clear up to the veranda—until fields and houses were deserted, and to the last inhabitant Needley was there.

Upon the ground squatted the Flopper, his eyes sweeping the ring of faces that was like a wall around him—the grinning faces of his fellow passengers from the train; the stony, concerned, and rather sullen faces of the men of Needley; the anxious, excited faces of the women; the bewildered, curious, and somewhat frightened faces of the children, who pushed and shoved their elders for better vantage-ground.

The Flopper licked his lips and renewed the appeal he had been making for nearly five minutes.

" Ain't no one goin' to drive me out to de Patriarch's?"

" Horses are all busy in the fields," said a voice uncompromisingly.

" Yes," muttered the Flopper with bitter irony, " drivin' each other around, while youse are here starin' at me an' won't help."

His eyes caught Doc Madison's from the veranda and held them an instant to read a message and interpret the almost imperceptible, but significant, movement of Madison's head.

" Gee!" said the Flopper to himself, as his gaze swept the faces around him again. " Dis is a nice game de Doc's planted on me—he wants me to do de wiggle out dere fer de rubes! Ain't dey a peachy lot—look at de saucer eyes on de kids!"

Mrs. Thornton, in her wheeled chair on the inner edge of the circle, turned to her husband.

" It's very strange that no one seems willing to drive him," she said.

" Oh, not very," responded Thornton with a short laugh. " I don't blame them—they don't want this healer of theirs made a monkey of."

" If no one will drive him, he shall have my wheel-chair," announced Mrs. Thornton impulsively. " I think it is a perfect shame—the poor man!"

" Nonsense!" exclaimed Thornton gruffly. " You'll do nothing of the kind."

" Yes, Robert, I will," declared his wife with determination. She leaned forward and called to the Flopper. " Mr. Coogan, if you can't find any other way of getting out there, I want you to take this chair of mine—you'll be able to manage with it, I am sure."

The Flopper looked at her with gratitude, but shook his head, mindful of Doc Madison.

" T'anks, mum," he said, " but I couldn't t'ink of it—you needs it more'n me."

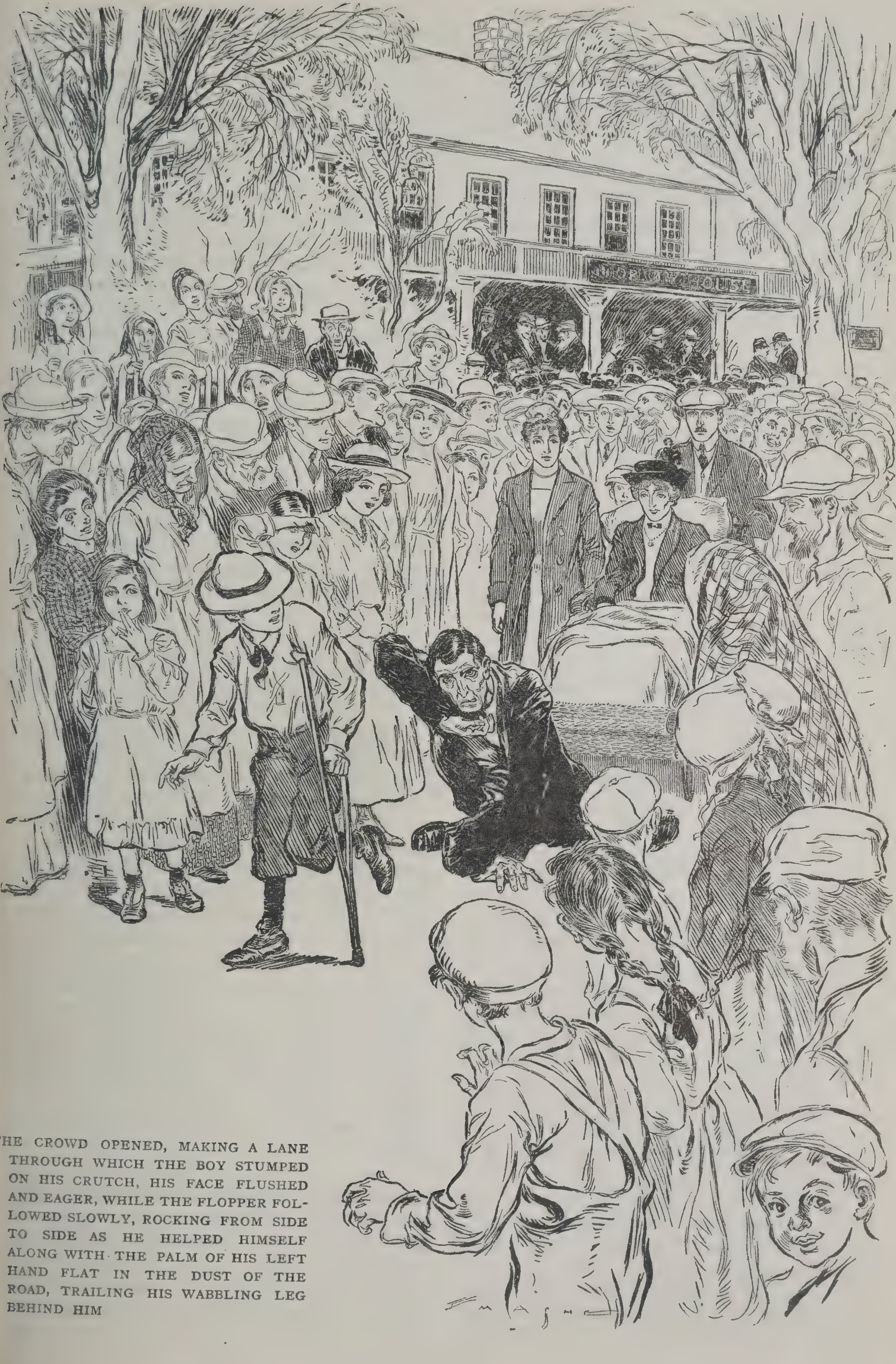
" Please do," she insisted.

" T'anks, mum," said the Flopper again, " but I couldn't. You needs it, an' I can get along widout it. Dey're stallin' on me, but I can get dere by myself if any one'll show me de way."

" I'll show you, mister," piped a shrill voice, and young Holmes, on his crutch, hopped into the circle. " I'll show you, mister, an' 'tain't fur neither."

" Swipe me!" muttered the Flopper, as he surveyed the lad. " Dis is de limit fer fair!" Perturbed and uncertain what to do, he tried to catch Doc's eye again, but a movement in the crowd had hidden Madison.

The lingerie drummer, getting the grim humor of the situation, laughed, and the laugh came like a challenge, taunting the quick-tempered soul of the Flopper.



THE CROWD OPENED, MAKING A LANE THROUGH WHICH THE BOY STUMPED ON HIS CRUTCH, HIS FACE FLUSHED AND EAGER, WHILE THE FLOPPER FOLLOWED SLOWLY, ROCKING FROM SIDE TO SIDE AS HE HELPED HIMSELF ALONG WITH THE PALM OF HIS LEFT HAND FLAT IN THE DUST OF THE ROAD, TRAILING HIS WABBLING LEG BEHIND HIM

"Come on, mister!" urged the boy excitedly.

"God bless you, son," said the Flopper, while he flung an inward curse at the man who had laughed. "Son, God bless you fer yer good heart; go ahead, I'll stick to you."

The crowd opened, making a lane through which the boy stumped on his crutch, his face flushed and eager, while the Flopper followed slowly, rocking from side to side as he helped himself along with the palm of his left hand flat in the dust of the road, trailing his wabbling leg behind him.

The crowd closed in behind and moved forward.

Mrs. Thornton's face was fever-flushed, her eyes bright; in her weak state she was on the verge of nervous hysteria.

"I want to go, Robert!" she cried. "I must go!"

"But, my dear," protested Thornton harshly, "this is simply the height of absurdity. For Heaven's sake be sensible, Naida. Just imagine what people would say if they saw us here with this outfit of idiots; they'd think we'd gone mad."

"I don't care what they'd think," she returned feverishly, her frail fingers plucking nervously at the arms of her chair. "I must go—I must—I must."

Thornton glanced at the nurse, then stared at his wife. Miss Harvey's meaning look was hardly necessary to drive home to him the fact that Mrs. Thornton was in no condition to be denied anything.

Red-faced, Thornton strode to the back of the chair and began to push it along.

"Of all the damned foolishness that ever I heard of," he gritted savagely, "this is the worst!" His face went redder still with mortification. "If this ever leaks out I'll never hear the last of it. Look at us—bringing up the rear of a gibbering mob of yokels! We're fit for a padded cell!"

In the crowd Madison rubbed shoulders for a moment with Pale Face Harry.

"Who's the party with the wheel-chair behind?" the former asked.

"Millionaire — Chicago — private car —Flopper's got the wife going hard—rode down with them," coughed Pale Face Harry behind his hand.

"I guess I'll get next," said Madison. "Circulate, Harry, and cough your head off—don't hide your light under a bushel—circulate." And Madison fell back to scrape acquaintance with the man of millions.

Close-packed upon the road, the procession spread out for a hundred yards behind the Flopper — barefooted children; women in multicolored gingham and calico; men in the uncouth dress of the fields, the uncouthness accentuated by the sprinkling of more pretentious clothing worn by those who had come from the train. And slowly, very slowly, this conglomerate human cosmorama moved on, undulating queerly with the variant movements of its component parts, snail-like, for the Flopper's pace was slow—as strange a spectacle, perhaps, as the human eye had ever witnessed, something of grimness, something of humor, something of awe, something of fear exuding from it.

On the procession went, so slowly as to be almost sinister in its movement, until at last the cottage of the Patriarch was reached. There the throng spread out in a long, thin line beneath the maples on either side of the Flopper—and waited.

CHAPTER X

THE MIRACLE

THERE was utter silence now, the tread of shuffling feet was gone, no man moved, it seemed as though no man *breathed*. What was to come? What drear tragedy was to be enacted? What awful mockery was to fall upon this maimed and mutilated creature within whose deformed and pitiful body there, too, was a human soul?

From the cottage door across the lawn came two figures—a girl in simple, clinging white, her head bowed, and beside her walked the Patriarch, his hand resting lightly upon her arm, a wondrous figure of a man, majestic, simple, grand, his silvered hair bared to the sun, his face illumined.

"There he is, mister!" whispered young Holmes hoarsely. "There he is! Go on, mister, go on — see what he can do for you!"

There came a sound that was like a great, gasping intake of breath as men and women watched. Out toward the Patriarch, alone now, the Flopper began to wriggle and writhe his way along.

More heartrending was his every movement, for with his quickened pace he sought to move without the aid of the only member that was as other men's, his left hand and arm that, in pleading, yearning supplication, was stretched out before him to the Patriarch.

The extreme ends of the long line of watchers curled a little inward, almost imperceptibly, a half step taken without volition. The crippled boy, swaying upon his crutch, his lips parted, trembling in every limb, edged forward hesitantly, fearfully, now a foot, now another, now the bare space of a single inch.

On went the Flopper. There was still a yard to go—two feet—*one*. Stopped in a sudden, deathless hush was all sound. The Flopper flung himself forward upon his face at the Patriarch's feet. Stopped was all movement, haggard and tense every face, strained every eye.

For a moment that seemed to span eternity, in a huddled heap, that crippled, twisted thing lay there before them motionless, the venerable face above it still intent, still listening, turned slowly downward. Then there was a movement—a movement that blanched the watching faces to a more pallid white—that dangling, wabbling leg drew inward slowly, very slowly, and hip and knee, as though guided by some mighty power, immutable, supreme, came deliberately into normal form.

A shriek, a cry, a wail, a sob, a prayer—it came now unrestrained—hysteria was loosed; men clutched at each other and cowered, hiding their faces with their hands; women dropped to their knees and, sobbing, screaming, prayed. Loud it rose, the turmoil of human souls aghast and quailing before a manifestation that seemed to fling them face to face, uncovered, naked, before the awful power and majesty and might of Heaven itself.

They looked again — fearfully. The twisted thing was standing now, standing but still deformed — with crooked neck, with curved, bent, palsied arm. And nearer had drawn little Holmes, his head thrust forward, shaking as with the ague as he gazed on the group before him, oblivious to all else around.

A twinge of frightful torture swept the Flopper's face, and with that slow, awful deliberation the misshapen arm straightened out. Men cried aloud again and again; a woman fainted, another here, another there; children wailed and ran, some shrieking, some whimpering, for the woods.

Again the spasm crossed the Flopper's face—a shuddering, muscular contortion—and from the shoulder rose his head.

Inward drew the ends of the line of paroxysm-stricken people — not far, not near to that hallowed group, for something held them back; but inward gradually until the line, no longer straight, was half a circle, crescent shaped. Louder came that harrowing medley of sounds, its component parts voicing the uttermost depths of the soul of each separate individual man and woman there—some moaned in terror; some prayed, mumbling, still upon their knees; some laughed hoarsely, wildly, their senses for the moment gone; and some were dumb; and some shrieked their prayers in frenzy.

Louder it grew—the end had come—that deformed thing stood erect, a perfect man; he turned his face toward them, he stretched out his arms, and they answered him with their wails, their sobs, their moans, their cries—answered him from their knees, their voices hoarse—answered him with trembling lips and tongues that would not move.

And then, suddenly, as though riven where they stood and knelt and crouched, all movement ceased and every heart stood still as, ringing clear above all else, shocking all else to stunned, petrified silence, there came a cry—a cry in a young voice. It rang again and again, trembling with glad, new life, vibrant, a cry that seemed to thrill with chords of happiness and ecstasy immeasurable.

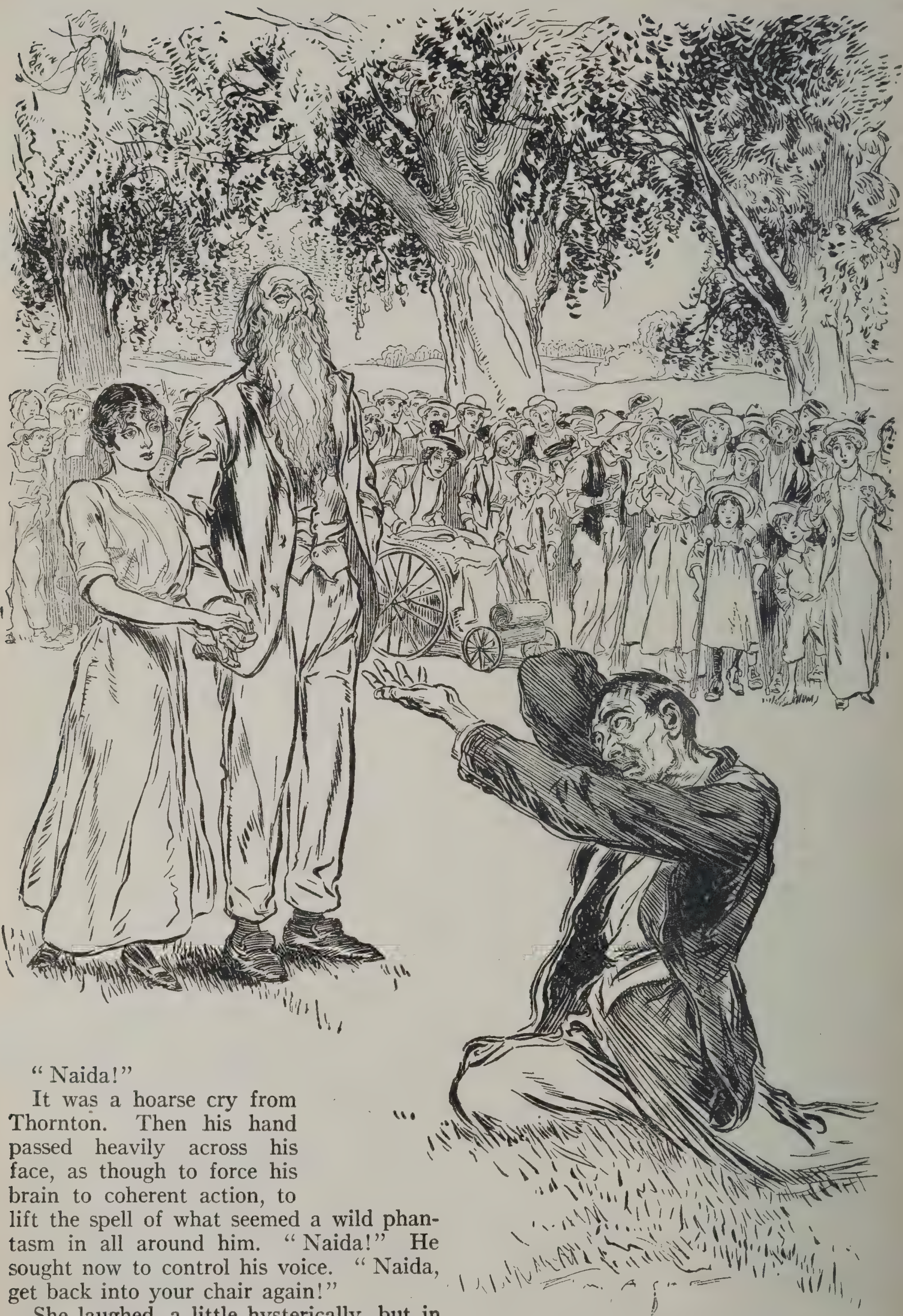
Again it came, again, exultant, pulsing with a mighty joy — young Holmes had *flung his crutch from him* and, with outstretched arms, was running toward the Patriarch across the lawn.

For an instant more that stunned, awed silence held. All eyes were riveted and fixed upon the scene — none looked at Madison—if any had they would have seen that his face had gone an ivory white.

CHAPTER XI

THE AFTERMATH

"I AM cured, Robert! Robert! Robert! See, I, too, am cured! Oh, Robert, what wondrous joy!" Mrs. Thornton had left her wheel-chair and was standing beside her husband, standing alone, unaided for the first time in many months.



HIS LEFT HAND WAS STRETCHED OUT IN PLEADING, YEARNING SUPPLICATION TO THE PATRIARCH

"Naida!"

It was a hoarse cry from Thornton. Then his hand passed heavily across his face, as though to force his brain to coherent action, to lift the spell of what seemed a wild phantasm in all around him. "Naida!" He sought now to control his voice. "Naida, get back into your chair again!"

She laughed, a little hysterically, but in the laugh was the uplift of a soul enraptured.

"But I am cured, Robert. See, dear; can't you understand?" She shook his arm. "See—I am cured. I can walk just as I could before I was ill. Oh, Robert, Robert! See! See!" She went from him, walking a little, running a little, laughing the while a low, rippling, glorious laugh that was like the music of silver chimes ringing out in glad acclaim.

He stared at her, both hands now to his temples; then he turned to look strangely at the empty chair—but it was not empty. Miss Harvey, the nurse, on her knees, had flung herself across it and, with buried head, was sobbing unrestrainedly.

And now upon the lawn was enacted a scene indescribable. The long line was broken. Men and women ran hither and thither, for the most part aimlessly, as though in some strange state of coma where the mind refused its functions. They talked and cried and shouted at each other in frenzy without knowing what they said—some with tears raining down their faces, others with blank countenances, no sign of emotion upon them other than the wild, dilated eyes. Here and there they rushed without volition, their throat noises rising above them, floating through the still air in a sound that no ear had ever heard before, weird, terrifying.

Faith? Faith is a matter of degree, is it not? Who shall define faith? Who shall say what it is, and who shall place its limitations upon it?

Out in the center of the lawn young Holmes was in his mother's arms, the father pathetically trying to wrap both mother and child in one embrace. Around them the crowd constantly grew larger. Farther out again, Helena was leading the Patriarch toward the cottage, the Flopper close behind her—the Patriarch walking with a slow tread, his head still turned in that listening attitude—and at a distance followed a straggling crowd. Then the cottage door was shut, and Helena, the Patriarch, and the Flopper disappeared from view.

A dozen yards from the wheel-chair stood Madison, riveted to the spot, motionless save for a nervous twitching of the lips, his eyes now upon the invalid who walked about, now on the little lad who had thrown away his crutch. Some one plucked at his sleeve, but Madison gave no heed—again his arm was pulled, and he turned to see Pale Face Harry beside him. The other's countenance was gray, the eyes full of a shrinking, terrified light.

"Doc; for God's sake, Doc, what does it mean?" whispered Harry shakily, moistening his dry lips with his tongue. "Doc, this ain't no bunk—there's something in it."

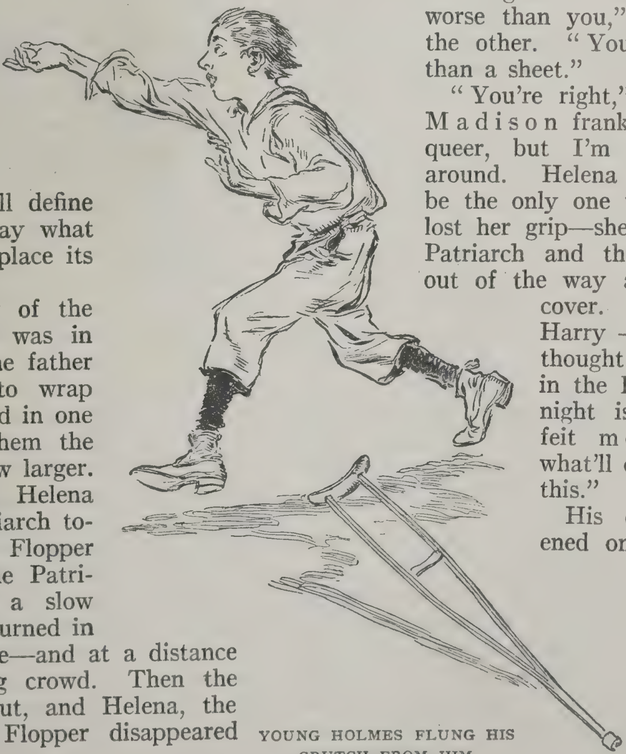
The words seemed to rouse Madison to leadership. He stared at the other for a moment, then a grim smile flickered across his face.

"Something in it!" he repeated with an ironic laugh, and suddenly grabbed Pale Face Harry's arm and shook him. "There's so much in it that I'm drunk with it, crazy with it; but I'm trying to make myself believe it isn't too good to be true. Get that? Get a grip on that, and hang on. Don't lose your nerve, Harry!"

"I guess I ain't much worse than you," mumbled the other. "You're whiter than a sheet."

"You're right," admitted Madison frankly. "I'm queer, but I'm coming around. Helena seems to be the only one who never lost her grip—she's got the Patriarch and the Flopper out of the way and under cover. Brace up, Harry — what I thought we'd get in the Roost that night is counterfeit money to what'll come from this."

His eyes fastened on a figure



YOUNG HOLMES FLUNG HIS CRUTCH FROM HIM

that, separating itself from the group around young Holmes, now dashed frantically, hatless, and with disheveled hair up to Mr. and Mrs. Thornton.

"Who's that, Harry? He came down on the train with you—know him?"

"He's only some newspaper guy or other," answered Pale Face Harry mechanically, his eyes still roving wildly over the scene around him.

"Oh, is that *all?*" ejaculated Madison with a little gasp. "I've already exhausted my thanks to Santa Claus, and here he comes with another package done up in dinky pink paper tied with baby ribbon, and the gold platter it's on goes with it!"

"What d'ye mean?" asked Harry heavily.

The newspaperman, the instinct of his calling now rising paramount to all else, had left the Thorntons and was tearing for the wagon-track on his way to the station and the telegraph-office like one possessed.

"By to-morrow morning," went on Madison softly, "the missionaries will be explaining this to the Eskimo at Oo-loulou, the near-invalids in California will be packing their trunks, likewise those in the languid shade of the Florida palms; they'll be listing it on the stock exchange in New York, and the breath of Eden will waft itself o'er plain and valley until—" he stopped suddenly as Mrs. Thornton's voice reached him.

"I am going to *walk* back, Robert."

"Yes; but, Naida," Thornton protested, "you're not strong enough yet."

"Don't you understand?" she cried, half laughing, half sobbing. "There is no 'yet.' I am cured, dear—*all* cured. I'm well and strong. Try to understand, Robert—oh, I'm so happy, so—so thankful. I know that it's almost impossible to believe—but try to understand."

"I am trying to," said Thornton numbly, watching her as she moved about. "And it seems as though I were in a dream—that this isn't real — that you're not real."

"It's not a dream," she affirmed. "Oh, I'm so strong again! Why, Robert, it would be just as absurd for me to be wheeled back in that chair as for you to be, and besides I have no right to do that now. It would be a sacrilege, profaning the gratitude in my heart. I am cured, and these poor people here must see that I am cured. Robert, we must leave that wheel-chair here that others, poor sufferers who will come now, will see and believe and be cured, too. And, Robert, in some way, we who are rich must do something to help people get here."

"Naida"—and Thornton's voice was low and shaken—"I feel as though I were in another world. I have seen what I can hardly make myself believe that I have seen. I feel as you do about helping others—how could I feel otherwise? What we can do I do not know as yet, either; but I will do anything. I was a scoffing fool—and you were cured before my eyes, a boy was cured, and that other, deformed as no creature was ever deformed before, was cured."

Thornton's lips quivered, and he hid his face in his hands.

"While the iron is hot—strike," murmured Madison.

He gazed a moment longer at the group. Mrs. Thornton's hand was on her husband's shoulder now—then his eyes roved over the frenzied scenes still being enacted everywhere upon the lawn.

"I wonder?" he muttered. The frown on his forehead cleared suddenly. "Of course!" said he to Pale Face Harry. "It's a cinch—it's as good as done!"

Harry stared at him queerly.

"No, Harry," smiled Madison, "my pulse is quite normal now, thank you. Listen. This is where we call the first show-down on cold hands—and the dealer slips himself an ace." He drew a key from his pocket and put it in Harry's hand. "That's the key of the small trunk in my room at the hotel—front room, right-hand side of the hall. There's a check-book in the tray—and I'll give you twenty minutes to get back here with it. You'll find me somewhere around here, but you needn't let the whole earth in on the presentation—see? Now beat it!"

As Pale Face Harry hurried away, Madison, seemingly as aimless, as hysterical as the hundreds about him, moved here and there, but unostentatiously he kept nearing the upper end of the lawn, and finally, hidden by the wood-shed at the farther end of the cottage, he slipped quickly around to the rear. Here the garden stretched almost to the edge of the sandy beach—not a soul was in sight—and the beat of the surf deadened the sound from the front lawn to little more than a low, indistinct murmur.

Quickly now Madison stepped to where one of the old-fashioned windows, that swung inward from the center like double doors, was open and, reaching in his hand, tapped sharply twice in succession with his knuckles on the pane. The sill was not quite on a level with his shoulders and he could see inside—it was Helena's room, and the door to the hall was open. Again he knocked. Came then the sound of footsteps, and from the hall the Flopper's face peered cautiously around the jamb of the door.

"Tell Helena to come here," called Madison softly.

The Flopper turned his head, called obediently, and in a dazed sort of way came himself to the window. His face was haggard, and he shivered as he licked his lips.

"I pulled de stunt," said the Flopper in a croaking voice, "but de kid, Doc; did you see the kid? I got de shakes—it's like de whole of hell an' de other place was loose, an' Helena's gone batty, an'—pipe her, dere she is."

Into the room came Helena, her face like chalk, all color gone from even her lips. She clutched at the window beside the Flopper for support.

"I'm frightened," she whispered. "We've gone too far—it's—it's—John Madison, I'm frightened."

Madison did not speak for a moment—he was a consummate leader. He looked, smiling reassuringly, from one to the other, and then leaned soothingly, confidentially, in over the sill.

"I know how you feel — felt just the same myself for a bit," said he quietly. "But now look here; you've got to pull yourselves together—there's nothing to be afraid of. It's natural enough. It's faith, Helena, and that's what we were banking on, only not quite so hard. That kid and Mrs. Thornton annexed the real brand, that's all, and when the genuine thing is on tap I cross my fingers and yell for faith—there's nothing to stop it. And that's the way it's got both of you, too, eh? Well, that only makes our game the safer and the more certain, doesn't it? So come on, now, pull yourselves together."

"In de last act, when I was gettin' me head into joint," mumbled the Flopper, "was when de kid yelled—I can hear it yet, an'—"

"Forget it!" Madison broke in a little sharply; then, tactfully, his voice full of unbounded admiration: "You're an artist, Flopper—a wonder. You pulled the greatest act that was ever on the boards, and you pulled it as no other man on earth could have pulled it. Flopper, you make me feel humble when I look at you."

"Swipe me!" said the Flopper, brightening. "D'ye mean it, Doc—honest?"

"Mean it?" ejaculated Madison. "You're the whole thing, Flopper—you win. Come on now, Helena, buck up—we've got another little act due in about fifteen minutes—don't let a lot of yowling rubes get your goat. Why, say, we've got the whole show on the stampede — and we've got to rush our luck."

"Sure!" struck in the Flopper. "Dat's de way to talk—leave it to de Doc every time. I ain't feezed half de way I was."

"I'm all right," said Helena a little tremulously. "What is it we're to do?"

"Good!" said Madison, smiling at her approvingly. "That sounds better. Now listen—and listen hard. From this minute this cottage is the shrine. Get that? Shrine. You've got to keep the hush falling here, and keep it falling all the time—a sort of holy, hallowed silence, understand? Lay it on thick—make the crowd stand back—make the guy that comes in here feel as though he ought to come in on his knees and as if he'd be struck dead if he didn't. Get the slow music and the low lights working. And keep the Patriarch well back of the drop except when he's on for a turn. Get me? He's no side show with a barker in front of the tent—don't forget that for a minute. The harder it is to get to see the Patriarch and the less he's seen the bigger he plays up when he's on. He goes to no man under any conditions, and the only man or woman that gets to him is through faith and supplication, and a double order of it at that. Keep the solemn, breathless tap turned on all the time."

Helena looked at him with a strange little smile quivering on her lips.

"It's a good thing I've got a sense of humor," she said slowly, "or else I think I'd—I'd—"

"No, you wouldn't," interposed Madison cheerfully. "But time's flying. You're going to have visitors in a few minutes, and here's where the Patriarch gets tucked away out of sight behind the veil for a starter, leaving his presence hovering and throbbing all around in the air. You stay with him, Flopper, in a back room somewhere, and hold his hand. Where is he now?"

"In his armchair in the sitting-room," said Helena. "And he's still listening in that queer way he did out on the lawn. I think he knows in a faint sort of way what's happened."

"That's good," exclaimed Madison; "it'll make him happy. Well, lead him gently into retirement. I guess that's all—now, hurry."

"Who is it that's coming?" interposed Helena quickly, as Madison started away from the window.

Madison grinned.

"Some friends of the Flopper's. Mr. and Mrs. Thank-Offering—you'll like them immensely, Helena. The lady walks quite well now, and—"

"Walks!" exclaimed the Flopper, who evidently had not assimilated Madison's previous reference to Mrs. Thornton. "De lady dat I come wid in de private car—*walks?*"

"Of course," said Madison pleasantly.

"Cured? All cured?" gasped the Flopper.

"Of course," said Madison again—complacently.

"Say," cried the Flopper—"say, I'm goin' dippy! Another one de same as de kid, Doc?"

"Same as the kid, Flopper—faith."

"Swipe me!" muttered the Flopper helplessly.

CHAPTER XII

"SAID THE SPIDER TO THE FLY"

By the wheel-chair, Mrs. Thornton, her husband, and Doc Madison were in earnest conversation—and around them was a mass of people. The crowd had divided into two, or, rather, was constantly coming and going between two points—young Holmes and Mrs. Thornton—and still the hysteria was upon men and women.

"I am stunned and stupefied," Madison was saying, and his hand trembled visibly in its outflung gesture. "I am not, I am afraid, a man of deep sensibilities, but I cannot help feeling that I have been chosen to witness this sight for some great, ulterior purpose. It's as though this place were hallowed, set apart; that here, if only one has faith, man's miraculous power is boundless—feel I should help some way. I—I'm afraid I don't explain myself well."

"I know what you mean," Mrs. Thornton returned eagerly. "It is what I was saying to my husband—to make this place known, to help to bring suffering people here."

Madison nodded silently.

"And if you, who have no personal cause for gratitude, feel like that, how much more should we who — who — oh, there are no words to tell it—my heart is too full!" Mrs. Thornton smiled through tears. "Robert, you said you would do anything."

"Yes, dear," Thornton answered gravely. "But what? We cannot do things in a moment. If money—"

Madison shook his head.

"It's beyond money," he explained. "Money is only a secondary consideration. It's the needs of the place that are paramount. It's not so much the bringing of people here—they will hear of what has taken place and will flock here in numbers as time goes on. But then—what? What can be done with them in this little village? For a time, perhaps, they could be accommodated — but after that they must be turned away."

"Turned away!" exclaimed Mrs. Thornton in a hurt voice. "Turned away from hope—to bitterness and misery again! No, no; they must not! Why"—she grasped her husband's arm agitatedly—"why couldn't we buy land and put little houses upon it where they could stay?"

Madison leaned suddenly toward her.

"I believe you've hit on the idea, Mrs. Thornton," he said excitedly. "Why not? It would be the finest thing that was ever done in the world. But why not go further—this should not be a private enterprise with the burden on the few."

He turned abruptly on Mr. Thornton.

"What a monument from grateful hearts, what a tribute to that saintly soul a huge sanatorium, built and properly endowed, would be! And it is feasible—purely from the voluntary contributions of those who come here and have money—free as the air to the poor who are sick—free to *all*, for that matter—no one asked to give—but the poorest would gladly lay down their mites."

"Yes—oh, yes!" cried Mrs. Thornton raptly.

"Yes," admitted her husband thoughtfully; "that might be done."

"There is no doubt of it," asserted Madison enthusiastically. "It needs but the initiative on the part of some one, on our part, and the rest will take care of itself. But we must, of course, have the indorsement of the Patriarch. Why not go to the cottage now, at once, and talk it over?"

"Can we see *him?"* asked Mrs. Thornton wistfully. "Oh, I would like to kneel at his feet and pour out my gratitude! But see how all these people go no nearer than that row of trees, as though love or fear or reverence kept them from going farther."

"True," said Madison; "and I sense that very thing myself — all men must sense it after what has taken place; all must feel the presence of a power too majestic, too full of awe for the mind to grasp. This faith"—he threw out his hands in an impotent gesture—"we can only accept it unquestioningly as a mighty thing, an actual, living, existent thing, even if we cannot fully understand. But I feel that with what we have in mind we have a right to go there now—and we should take that little lad who was cured as well—and his parents, they should come, too."

"And shall we see *him?*" Mrs. Thornton asked again tensely.

"Why, I do not know," Madison replied; "but at least we shall see his niece, Miss Vail; and it is with her, in any case, that we would have to discuss the plan, for the Patriarch, you know, is deaf and dumb and blind."

"You know them, don't you?" Thornton inquired.

Madison smiled a little strangely, a little deprecatingly.

"If one can speak of 'knowing' such as they—yes," he answered. "When I came, two weeks ago, the Patriarch was not wholly blind, and he was very kind to me. I learned to love the gentle soul of the man, and in a way, skeptical though I was, I felt his power; but I never realized until this afternoon how stupendous, how immeasurable it was."

"Let us go to the cottage, then," suggested Thornton. "Naida dear, let me help you; it is quite a little distance and—"

She put out her hands in a happy, intimate way to hold him off.

"You can't realize it, Robert, can you? That dear, practical business head of yours makes it even harder for you than it is for me—and I can hardly realize it myself. But I *am* cured, dear, and I'm well and strong, and I don't need any help. Why, Robert, I am going to help you now, instead of always being a source of worry and anxiety to you. Come, let us go."

"If you will walk slowly," suggested Madison, "I'll speak to the little Holmes boy and his parents, and bring them with us."

He moved away as he spoke—in the direction of a racking cough that rose above the confused, murmuring voices on every hand; and in a little knot of people he was for a moment pressed close against Pale Face Harry.

"All right," whispered the latter; "it's in your pocket now—but say, no more runs like that for me; I'm all in. I thought sure I was cured myself—I hadn't coughed for—"

"Never mind about that now," said Madison rapidly. "I want the crowd kept away from the doors of the bank vault if they show any tendency to get too close, though I don't think that'll happen—they're too numbed and scared yet. But you know the game. Keep the awe going and the 'holy ground' signs up. Anybody that steps across that stretch between the trees and the cottage on and after the present date of writing does it with bowed head and his shoes off—get the idea?"

Pale Face Harry grinned.

"That's easy," he answered. "Anything'd steer 'em now—they're like sheep. Leave it to me to keep the soft pedal on."

With a nod Madison turned away, the tense expression on his face assumed again; and presently he was talking to Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, and patting the boy's head in a clumsy, overwrought fashion.

"I—I don't dar'st to go," and Mrs. Holmes clutched wildly at the boy, still sobbing.

"But Mrs. Thornton is going," urged Madison gently, "and I know your gratitude is no less than hers—it couldn't be less, with this little lad restored to you. I am sure you want to show it—don't you?"

"I think we'd orter go, ma," said Mr. Holmes uneasily.

The boy put his hand in Madison's.

"I want to go, mister," he choked. "Take me, mister, won't you?"

"Yes, I think we'd orter go," repeated Mr. Holmes. "Come along, ma," and he took his wife's arm.

It was a strange group—the Thorntons, rich, refined, to whom luxury was necessity; the Holmeses, poor, uncultured, coarsely dressed; and Madison, who walked with set face, head lowered a little, his pace slowing perceptibly, humbly it seemed, the nearer he came to the cottage door.

Neither Thornton, nor Holmes, nor Holmes's wife spoke. Mrs. Thornton's arm was flung around the boy's shoulder, and he kept looking up into her tearful face—there was a bond between them that, young as he was, held him in its thrall. Out across the lawn, dotted here and there in knots and groups and little crowds, men and women stopped where they stood and watched, making no effort to follow—and some, at the renewed evidence of the miraculous, once more so vividly before their eyes, dropped again to their knees.

They reached the door and Madison drew back a little and, with the others, waited silently after he had knocked. Then the door opened slowly and Helena, slim and girlish in her simple white dress, appeared upon the threshold. Her great dark eyes traveled slowly from one to another, and then her face lighted with a gentle smile.

"Miss Vail," began Madison diffidently, "this is Mrs. Thornton and her husband and the little lad, with his parents, who owe so much to the Patriarch, and they have come to—"

"To try and say a little of what is in their hearts." Mrs. Thornton stepped impulsively forward and held out her hands to Helena; then, breaking down suddenly, she began to sob, and the two were in each other's arms.

Doc Madison shot a covert glance at the three behind him—Thornton and Holmes and Mrs. Holmes. Holmes, with downcast eyes, was shuffling awkwardly from foot to foot; Mrs. Holmes, her woman's instinct touched, was watching the scene with face aglow, her eyes moist anew; Thornton was staring fascinated at Helena, a sort of breathless, wondering admiration in his eyes.

Madison involuntarily followed Thornton's look; then stole a glance back again at Thornton, who was still gazing intently at Helena.

"Say," observed Madison to himself, "the longer you live the more you learn, don't you? That's the kind of stuff Helena wears from now on, the clinging white, with the bare throat effect, and all that. Why, say, like that she's what the poets call radiantly divine—eh, what?"

Mrs. Thornton raised her head, and her hands, creeping to Helena's face, brushed the brown hair tenderly back from the white forehead.

"Oh, how good and sweet and pure you are!" she murmured brokenly.

A quick, sudden flush, passing, to all but Madison, as one of demure and startled modesty, swept in a crimson tide to Helena's face.

"You — you must not say that," she faltered, shaking her head. "I — you must not say that."

Mrs. Thornton smiled at her and slipped her arm affectionately around Helena's waist.

"I could not help it, dear," she whispered. "It came spontaneously. And it makes me so happy to find you like this, makes it so much more a joy in doing what we have come to talk to you about."

"What you have come to talk to me about?" Helena, steadying herself, repeated the words almost composedly.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Thornton, an eagerness in her voice again. "But—may we come in? Is it—"

"All may come in here," Helena answered softly; "and" — her eyes met Thornton's fixed gaze and dropped quickly—"please come in," she ended abruptly.

CHAPTER XIII

REAL MONEY

THE two women passed inside the cottage, Mrs. Thornton holding out her hand again to the little lad; while Holmes and his wife followed hesitantly, awed. In the rear Thornton grasped Madison's arm suddenly.

"I never saw such a beautiful face," he whispered tensely. "It's wonderful."

"Yes," assented Madison. "But everything here seems full of a rare, strange beauty, a hallowed something—it lifts one beyond material things. You *feel* it—a great, calm solemnity all about you."

He closed the door softly behind him.

Mrs. Thornton's eyes swept questioningly, anxiously, and a little timidly about the plain, quiet room; and then she spoke, her voice unconsciously hushed:

"He—he is not here?"

Helena shook her head as she led Mrs. Thornton to a chair.

"Not now," she replied in a low voice. "The strain of this afternoon has left him weary and very tired—much has gone out of him in response to the faith he felt but could not see."

"But he knows?" said Mrs. Thornton eagerly, reaching for Helena's hand. "He knows?"

"Yes," Helena answered quietly, "he knows. He always knows." She nodded gravely to the others. "Please sit down."

Madison quietly took the chair nearest the table; Thornton one a little in front of Madison and nearer his wife and Helena, who were close by the big open fireplace; the two Holmeses sat down on the edges of chairs a little behind Madison; while young Holmes knelt, his arms in Mrs. Thornton's lap, his head turned a little sidewise, his chin cupped in one hand, as he stared breathlessly around him.

It was the boy who broke the momentary silence.

"Ain't that other fellow here, neither—the fellow that was worse'n me?" he whispered.

Helena leaned toward him.

"Yes; he is here," she answered, smiling sweetly. "He is with the Patriarch." She lifted her head to include the others in her words. "It is very wonderful, his gratitude. He will not leave the Patriarch—he says he will not leave him ever, that all he has to give for the debt he owes is the life the Patriarch gave back to him, and he will listen to nothing but that he should devote that life to the Patriarch's service."

"I'd like to, too." Young Holmes spoke with a quick flush on his face. "Can I, miss—can I?"

"Perhaps," said Helena gently. "Who knows what there may be that you can do?"

"Dear boy," said Mrs. Thornton, stroking the lad's head. She looked quickly at Helena. "We, too, are grateful, more than there are words to tell, and we, too, would like to show our gratitude. We are rich, and money—"

"Money!" The word came in shocked, hurt interruption from Helena as a signal flashed from Madison's eyes. "The Patriarch does not do these things for money—it would be a bitter grief to him to be misjudged in that way, even in thought. It is the love in his heart for the suffering ones, and his power goes out to all who ask it freely, with no thought of recompense or gain, and his joy and happiness are the joy and happiness of others."

"And right off the bat, too!" said Madison admiringly to himself. "Now wouldn't that get you? Say, could you beat it—could you beat it?"

"Oh, I did not mean that," and Mrs. Thornton spoke almost piteously. "Please, please do not think so, for I know so well that money, in a personal sense, could have no place here, that it would indeed be sacrilege. It is in quite another way. Robert, Mr. Madison, you explain what we should like to do."

It was Madison who explained.

"It is Mrs. Thornton's idea, Miss Vail," he said earnestly; "and it is one that I know will realize the Patriarch's dearest wish—to extend his sphere of helpfulness to others, to reach out to all who are stricken and have faith to come. I remember his writing that on the slate he used for conversation before his sight was completely taken from him. I remember the words as though they were before me now: 'I have dreamed often of a wider field, of reaching out to help the thousands beyond this little town—it would be wondrous joy.'"

"Yes?" said Helena in a suppressed voice.

"In a way," Madison went on gravely, "his dream is already realized. What has happened here this afternoon will in a few hours be known to the whole civilized world, and there will be no room for incredulity or doubt — on whatever ground people see fit to base their belief, they must still believe; and, believing, they will come here in ever-increasing numbers—but this little village is totally inadequate to accommodate them. At first, yes, as I said to Mrs. Thornton; but afterward — no. Mrs. Thornton's idea — Mr. Thornton's idea and my own, if I may say so—is to build and endow a great sanatorium that, in consonance with the Patriarch's ideals, shall be free to all, and we feel that the money for this purpose will come gladly and spontaneously, as it so appropriately should come, from those who find joy and peace and health again at the Patriarch's hands."

Helena half rose from her chair as she stole a veiled glance at Madison.

"It would be wonderful," she said with a little catch in her voice. "And he—it would be the one thing in the world for him. But—but it would take a great deal of money."

"Yes," said Madison slowly; "at least half a million."

Thornton turned toward Madison.

"As much as that?" he asked tentatively.

"I should say so," replied Madison thoughtfully. "You see, it's the endowment, after all, that is the most important. Say that the building and equipment cost only a hundred thousand, that would only leave an income from the other four hundred thousand, at six per cent, of twenty-four thousand dollars—not enough in itself even, but it would be augmented, of course, by the contributions that would still come in."

Thornton nodded his head.

"That is so," he agreed; "but there is the time to consider—it would take a long while to raise that amount."

"No," rejoined Madison. "A few months at the outside. Thornton"—he reached out and laid his hand impressively on the other's sleeve—"we are not dealing with ordinary things here; we have witnessed this afternoon a sight that should teach us that. Here in this very room, beside us now, your wife, that little boy, is evidence of power beyond what we have ever known before. Have we not that same power to count on still? It would be an ingrate heart indeed that, owing all, returned nothing."

"Yes," murmured Mrs. Thornton. "Mr. Madison is right. I know it, I feel it—the money will come faster than we have any idea of."

Madison smiled at her quietly.

"It will come," he continued. "People will give their money, their jewels, anything, and give joyfully; and until the amount in hand is large enough to warrant beginning operations, Miss Vail naturally will be its guardian."

"I?" said Helena hesitantly. "I—I am only a girl; I should not know what to do."

"You would not have to do anything, Miss Vail," Madison told her reassuringly. "When the time comes for advice, the making of plans and the carrying of them out, the brightest minds in this country will be offered freely, you will see."

"And meanwhile," inquired Thornton—he had been studying Helena's profile intently—"would you propose keeping the contributions here?"

"Of course!" said Madison. "And not only here, but openly displayed, as an added incentive for others to give, if added incentive be needed. Here, for instance"—he rose as he spoke, went to the mantel over the fireplace, and lifted down a quaint, japanned box, fashioned in the shape of a little chest, which he placed upon the table. "And here, too"—he crossed to the bookshelves in the alcove and took down a very old, flexible-covered book. "Once," he said, "the Patriarch showed me this. It was a blank book originally, half of it is blank still; but in the front, in the Patriarch's own writing, is an essay he wrote in the years gone by on 'The Power of Faith'—what could be more fitting than that the remaining pages should be filled with a record of the contributions to that faith?"

He laid the book on the table beside the little chest and sat down again. "There is no display, no ornamentation in this; it is simplicity, those things serving which are first at hand, as it seems to me it should be; those who give record their names and gifts in this book; the little chest to hold the gifts is open, free to the inspection of all."

"But is that wise?" demurred Thornton. "So large a sum of money as must accumulate to be left openly about? Would it not be a temptation to some to steal? Might it not even endanger Miss Vail and the Patriarch himself—subject them, indeed, to attack?"

"I get your idea," said Madison to himself, while he gazed at Thornton in pained surprise; "but there'll never be more than the day's catch in the box at a time; though, of course, you don't know that. You see, we'll empty it every night and start it off fresh every morning with a trinket or two put back for bait. I'm glad you mentioned it, though; it's a little detail I mustn't forget to speak to the Flopper about."

Aloud he said, and there was a sort of

shocked awe in his voice: “ Steal—*here!* In this sacred place! No man would dare—the most hardened criminal would draw back. Why do even we who sit here speak as we have been speaking, with hushed and lowered voices? That very sense of a presence unseen around us, that hovers over us, is a mightier safeguard than the strongest bolts and locks, than the steel-barred vaults of any bank. It would seem, indeed, to profane our own faith even to entertain such an idea; to me this place is a solemn shrine, and there is only purity and faith and stillness here, the dwelling-place of a power as compassionate as it is mighty.”

“I AM NOT A RICH MAN, MISS VAIL,” HE SAID WITH A GRAVE SMILE, “ BUT I CAN GIVE THIS, AND I GIVE IT WITH GREAT JOY IN MY HEART ”

Madison stopped abruptly and a silence fell. Each seemed busy with his or her own thoughts. About them was quiet, stillness, peace; twilight was falling, and a soft, mellow light filled the room.

“ No one would dare.” The words came from Mrs. Thornton breathlessly.

Madison's hand went to his pocket; slowly he drew out his check-book and laid it upon the table.

“ I am not a rich man ”—his voice was very low, very earnest—“ but I feel that this is something deeper, grander, bigger than anything the world perhaps has ever known before; something higher and above one's own self; it seems as though here were the chrysalis that, once developed to its perfect state, would sweep pain and sorrow from suffering humanity; it is as though a new, glad era had dawned for all mankind. I am glad to give and humbly proud to have a part in this.”

He took out his fountain pen, opened the check-book, and began to write.

Thornton leaned forward, watching him.

Silence fell again—there was no sound save the almost inaudible scratching of

Madison's pen. Upon Mrs. Thornton's face was a happy, radiant smile; Helena's was impassive, but in the dark eyes lurked a puzzled light; the two Holmeses sat awkwardly, still upon the edges of their chairs, gazing at their son across the room, incredulously, as though they still could not believe — and occasionally Mrs. Holmes wiped her eyes.

Madison's pen moved on: " Pay to the order of Miss Helena Vail the sum of ten thousand dollars." He carefully inscribed the amount in numerals in the lower left-hand corner.

" Honest," he confided to himself, as he signed the check, " I feel so philanthropic I could almost make myself believe I had this money in the bank."

He tore the check from its stub and, standing up, handed it to Helena.

" I am not a rich man, Miss Vail, as I mentioned," he said with a grave smile, " but I can give this, and I give it with great joy in my heart."

Helena took the check, glanced at it, gasped a little, lifted her eyes, an instant's mocking glint in them, and veiled them quickly with her long lashes.

" No "—Madison's hand, palm up, went out protestingly—" no; do not thank me, it is little enough."

He sat down again, drew the Patriarch's blank book toward him and, on the line beneath the one where the Patriarch had ended his essay with the words, " such is the power of faith," wrote his name and set down the amount of his contribution.

" Ten thousand dollars!" It was Mrs. Thornton speaking, as she took the check from Helena. She turned quickly to her husband. " Robert, have you your check-book here?"

Thornton shook his head.

" No, dear," he said. " I'm afraid I haven't."

" Well, it doesn't matter," said Mrs. Thornton brightly. " You can use one of Mr. Madison's checks and write the name of your own bank on it — you've often done that, you know."

" A suggestion," Madison murmured to himself, " for which I thank you, Mrs. Thornton; it sounds so much less crude coming from you than from me." But aloud he said courteously: " Take my pen, Mr. Thornton."

" Thank you," from the other as Madison placed it in his hand.

Mrs. Thornton and her husband had their heads together now and were whispering, Thornton with his eyes on Helena, who sat with lowered head, twirling Madison's check in her hands. Then Thornton drew the check-book toward him, scratched out the printed name of the bank it bore, wrote in another, and went on filling out the check.

" Eeny-meeny-miny-mo," said Madison to himself. " The suspense is awful. How much does he raise the ante? Next to the miracle, this is the first real thrill I've had —I feel like an elevator starting down quick."

As Madison had done, Thornton tore out the check and handed it to Helena. Helena stared at it, lifted her eyes to Thornton, flushed, and looked down at the check again.

" *Fifty thousand!* " she murmured breathlessly.

" Splendid!" cried Madison enthusiastically, rising from his chair and pushing the newly established record of contributions toward Thornton. " Splendid! There's sixty of the five hundred thousand already. Splendid!"

Young Holmes ran toward his parents.

" I want to give too, dad," he whispered. " I want to give, too."

" Reckon so," said Holmes, getting up heavily. " Reckon so—an' I was a goin' to. I ain't got much, though," he added timorously as his hand went into his pocket.

There was a little exclamation from Helena, and she moved a step forward, as though to interpose. Madison looked at her quickly and quietly stepped around the table, placing himself between her and Holmes; then, facing Holmes, he leaned over the table from the far side toward the other.

" It's not the amount, Holmes," he said kindly. " In the broad, true sense, the amount counts for nothing — all cannot give the same."

" Yes," assented Holmes. " Reckon that's the way I feel." He counted the bills in his hand and dropped them into the little japanned box; then scrawled his name in the book beneath Thornton's, adding the amount—eight dollars.

Madison looked around the group benignantly.

" I think they should know out there what we have done." He pointed toward the lawn. " Let us go and tell them, not in any set speech, but just simply—each of us speaking to a few—the few will tell others. Shall we go?"

" Yes," said Mrs. Thornton. " Yes; let us tell them." She turned to Helena and kissed her. " Try and come often to see me, dear—we shall be here now for a little while at least. Is it asking too much? Robert will bring you back and forth from the village. And perhaps, if I may, I will come out here to see you—may I?"

" I shall be very glad to do as my wife suggests," said Thornton, holding out his hand. " You will come, Miss Vail?"

" You are very good—both of you," Helena answered simply. She raised her eyes to Thornton—her hand was still in his. " Yes, I will try to come."

" Oh, break away!" muttered Madison impatiently — but inwardly. He stepped to the door and opened it. " Will you lead the way, Mrs. Thornton?" he said calmly, standing aside.

Thornton and his wife passed out; and the Holmeses, with clumsy, earnest words upon their lips to Helena, followed. Madison hung back—then stepped quickly to Helena.

" Tear up that check of mine so small you can't find the pieces, Helena," he said hurriedly; " and send Thornton's right off to any old bank you like in New York. Indorse it, and write them a note saying you wish to open an account. Enclose your signature, and tell them to mail back the bank-book, a check-book, deposit-slips, and all that. They'll know by the newspapers that Thornton's subscribed fifty thousand before they get the check, and they'll feel honored to be your depository. Do it to-night, understand?"

" Yes," and Helena nodded her head. " I'll see to it, all right." Then, a little perturbed: " But those poor Holmeses and their eight dollars, Doc, I—"

" Now, don't be greedy, Helena," rejoined Madison cheerfully. " You mustn't expect everybody to hand out ten and fifty thousand just because Thornton and I did; try and appreciate the little things of life, too."

" Oh!" exclaimed Helena angrily. " Doc Madison, I'd like to—"

" Yes, all right, of course," he interrupted, grinning. " Good-by! That's all—I'm off — see, they're waiting for me!" And leaving Helena with an outraged little flush upon her cheeks, he hurried through the door after the others.

CHAPTER XIV

KNOTTING THE STRINGS

It is an old saying that some have greatness thrust upon them. True of men, it is, in one instance at least, true of places—Needley, from an unheard-of, modest, innocuous, and unassuming little hamlet, leaped in a flash into the focus of the world's eyes.

In huge head-lines the papers in every city of every State carried it on their front pages. And while the first astounding despatch from the metropolitan newspaperman was being copied by leading dailies everywhere, there came on top of it, clinching its veracity beyond possibility of doubt, the news that Robert Thornton, the well-known Chicago multimillionaire, had given fifty thousand dollars to the cause.

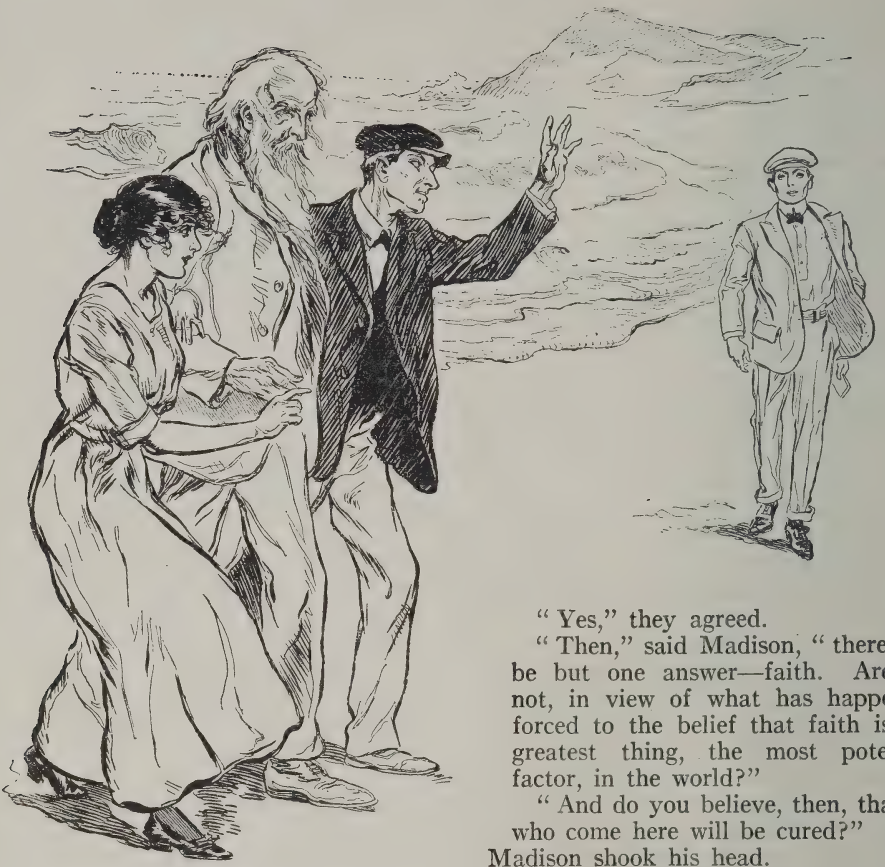
A man, much less a multimillionaire, doesn't give fifty thousand dollars for a bubble, so the managing editors of the leading dailies rushed for their star reporters—and the star reporters rushed for Needley — and the red-haired, sorrowful-faced man in the Needley station grew haggard, tottered on the verge of collapse, and, between the sheaves of flimsy that the reporters fought for the opportunity of pushing at him, wired desperately for a relief.

Needley awoke and came to life — as from the dead. There was bustle, activity, and suppressed and unsuppressed excitement on every hand—the Waldorf Hotel once more opened its doors—the Congress Hotel was already full.

The reporters interviewed everybody with but one exception—the Patriarch.

They interviewed Madison—and Madison talked to them gravely, quietly, a little self-deprecatingly, somewhat abashed at the thought of personal exploitage.

" I wouldn't be interviewed at all," he told them, " if it were not that mankind at large is entitled to every bit of evidence that can be obtained. Yes; I gave what I could afford, but it was Holmes, a poor man, who gave most of all—have you seen him? Myself? What does that matter? I am unknown; my personality, unlike Mr. Thornton's, can carry no weight. I



FROM PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE PATRIARCH, HELENA AND THE FLOPPER WARNED THEM OFF

am, I suppose, what you might call a rolling stone, a world wanderer. My parents left me a moderate fortune, and I have traveled pretty well and pretty constantly all over the world during the last twelve or fifteen years.

"How did I come to Needley? Well, you can call it luck, or something more than that, whichever way it appeals to you. I was feeling seedy, a little off-color, and I started down for a rest and lay-off in Maine. I happened to ask a man in Portland if he knew of a quiet place. He meant to be humorous, I imagine. He said Needley was the quietest place he knew of. I took him at his word."

"But how do you account for these miraculous cures?" they asked.

"You have seen them—the results," Madison replied. "You know the cures to be living, vital, irrefutable facts—don't you?"

"Yes," they agreed.

"Then," said Madison, "there can be but one answer—faith. Are we not, in view of what has happened, forced to the belief that faith is the greatest thing, the most potential factor, in the world?"

"And do you believe, then, that all who come here will be cured?"

Madison shook his head.

"Ah, no," he said; "far from it. Many will come with but the semblance of faith, and for those there can be no cure; that is evident on the face of it, is it not?"

They interviewed Thornton — and Thornton, too, talked to them; but the very presence of Mrs. Thornton was weightier far than words.

They interviewed the Holmeses, and they interviewed Needley, individually and collectively; and they interviewed Helena; but they did not interview the Patriarch. Here Helena barred their way; they were free to enter the cottage, to copy the names, the record of gifts inscribed in the book—already a long list, for Needley had required no other incentive to give than the example that had been set; but that was all.

Quietly, with demure simplicity, Helena, prompted by Madison, like a priestess who guards some holy, inner shrine, told them that sensational notoriety had no place there—and the notoriety, for that very cause, became the greater! Not that they were denied a sight of the Patriarch's venerable and saintly form—they were permitted to catch glimpses of him on the beach, on the lawn, walking with bowed head in meditation, a figure whose simple majesty inspired words and columns of glowing tribute, but from personal contact, Helena and the Flopper, always in attendance, warded them off; retreating always to the privacy of the cottage and its inner rooms.

All this had taken four days; and now, on the fifth day, there came to Needley the vanguard of those who sought this new healing power—just a few of them, two or three, like far, outflung skirmishers evidencing the presence of the army corps to follow. With the reporters, as far as Madison was concerned, it was simple enough; he had but to let them go their way, permit them to revel in the stories that were on every tongue, to let them view with their own eyes *facts*, while he, modestly and diffidently, full of quiet earnestness, effaced himself, never thrusting himself forward, talking to them only when they pressed him.

But the handling of the sufferers who would flock to Needley in response to a newspaper publicity and indorsement that had been beyond his wildest dreams was quite another matter. Madison viewed the first arrivals — brought in from the station on cot-beds to the Waldorf Hotel—and retired to his room in the Congress to wrestle with the niceties and minutiæ of the problem.

"You see," said Madison to the tip of his cigar, as he tilted back his chair and extended his legs full on the table-edge—"you see, I believe in faith, all right—and that's no josh. But the trouble with faith is that it's about the scarcest article on earth—and I haven't got any more Floppers to lead the way."

Madison adroitly sent the cigar-ash through the window with a tap of his forefinger on the body of the cigar; then he frowned, and for a long time sat musingly silent. Finally he spoke again, this time addressing the toes of his boots: "With the house sold out for the season, the box-office doing itself proud, and the audience crazy over the first two acts, how about act three — h-m — how about act three? Kind of a delicate proposition, the staging of act three, and it's time for the curtain to go up; I can hear 'em stamping out front now. I can't pull off any more orgies like last Monday afternoon, even if I wanted to, but everybody's got to have a run for his money. Say, how about act three?"

Madison burned up quite a little tobacco in the interval before supper, and quite a little more afterward before the setting for his perplexing "third act" appeared to unfold itself satisfactorily before his mind—indeed, it was close on to half past ten when, by a roundabout way, he very cautiously and silently approached the Patriarch's cottage.

In the front of the cottage, the shrine-room, as he had christened it, and the Patriarch's sleeping-room were both dark. Madison passed around to the beach side—here Helena's room was dark, too, but in the Flopper's window, the end room next to the kitchen and wood-shed, there was a light. The night was warm and, though the shade was drawn, the window was open.

Madison whistled softly, and the Flopper stuck out his head.

"Hello, Flopper," said Madison; "come out here, I want to talk to you. Helena in bed?"

"No; she's out," replied the Flopper.

"Well, hurry up!" urged Madison. "Come around in front by the trellis, where we can't be seen first if anybody happens to be strolling about."

Madison withdrew from the window and walked around to the front of the cottage. Here, a few yards from the porch, by the trellis, already beginning to be leafy green, was a rustic bench, on which he seated himself.

Presently the Flopper came out of the front door and joined him.

"Say, Doc," he announced abruptly, "de Patriarch's been askin' fer youse yesterday an' to-day."

"Asking?" repeated Madison.

"Sure," said the Flopper. "He can scrawl if he is blind, can't he? He scrawls yer name on de slate. We can't tell him nothin', an' he's kinder got de fidgets like he t'inks youse had flown de coop."

"That's so," muttered Madison. "It is rather difficult to communicate with him, isn't it? I guess we'll have to get him some raised letters."

"What's them?" inquired the Flopper.

"I don't know exactly," Madison answered. "I never saw any, but I believe they have such things. Been asking for me, has he? Well, I'll fix it to see him to-morrow. Where did you say Helena had gone?"

"I said she was out," answered the Flopper. "If you ask me where, I'd say de same place as last night an' de night before—down to dat private car wid his nibs. Say, dere's some class to dat guy, all right, an' I guess Helena ain't got her eyes shut."

"Hey!" ejaculated Madison. "What do you mean?"

"Well, he's got de rocks, ain't he?" declared the Flopper. "Why shouldn't she be after him? Dat's wot we're here fer, ain't it, de whole bunch of us? An' she ain't t'rowin' us, is she, if she sees a chanst to pick up somet'ing on her own?"

Madison turned quickly on the Flopper.

"You mean," he said sharply, "that there's something going on between Helena and Thornton—already?"

"Aw, stop kiddin'!" broke out the Flopper. "Already! Wot's 'already' got to do wid it? We ain't none of us church members, are we? Say, where'd you pick up Helena yerself, and how long did it take youse? I don't know whether dere's anyt'ing goin' on or not—mabbe she's only gettin' lonely — youse ain't hung around her much lately, Doc."

Madison laughed suddenly.

"You're talking through your hat, Flopper," he said shortly. "You don't know Helena."

"It's a wise guy dat knows skirts," quoth the Flopper profoundly; then, with something approaching a sigh: "Say, Doc, dere's a lalapazoozoo, a peach down here."

"Hello!" exclaimed Madison, shooting a hurried and critical glance at the Flopper in the moonlight. "What's this, Flopper—what's this? What have you been up to? You're supposed to be attending strictly to business."

"An' you needn't t'ink I ain't," asserted the Flopper. "But I can't stop de town fallin' over itself to bring de whole farmyard an' flour an' everyt'ing else out here every mornin', can I? She's blown in twice wid cream fer de Patriarch."

"What's her name?" inquired Madison quizzically.

"Mamie Rodgers," said the Flopper. "She says her old man keeps a store in de village."

"I know her," nodded Madison. "Pretty girl, and all right, Flopper. But mind what you're doing, that's all. I don't want any complications to queer things around here—understand? But let's get down to the business I came out about — the lay from now on. You can put Helena wise."

"Sure," said the Flopper earnestly.

"Well, then, listen," went on Madison. "The patients have begun to arrive—there were three of them in to-day. There's no more circus parades—everything's under the tent after this. I want you to wean the Patriarch entirely from that front room; that's to be free for anybody to enter, so's they can drink in atmosphere—and see the contribution-box. But they don't see the Patriarch. Put his armchair in his own room, and make him comfortable there—get the idea? Now there's no consultation hours—the Patriarch can't be seen just by asking for him — the only chance they get at the Patriarch is by an exercise of patience that'll work their faith up to a pitch that'll do them some good. The harder it is to get a thing, the more it's worth and the more you want it—that's the principle. See?"

"Sure," said the Flopper, licking his lips.

"Sometimes," Madison continued, "you're to keep the Patriarch under cover for two or three days, while they hang around working themselves into a frenzy. And when they do see him they have to scramble for it. You don't lead him out to them—ever. Make them waylay him when you take him for a walk; make them crawl and hop and show they've got faith; make them believe they've got faith themselves —we'll get some cures, or near-cures, anyway, that way, and we won't get them any other way; and we've got to have some sort of cures coming along fairly regularly. Do you get me, Flopper? If there's a party on a cot a hundred yards away and he begs you to bring the Patriarch to him, say him nay. Everybody has got to get into the reserved paddock by themselves; tell them that no man can be cured who has not got the faith to reach the Patriarch by himself; tell them to get up and *walk* to him —tell them what you did."

"Swipe me!" said the Flopper. "Say, Doc, youse are de one an' only. I gotcher —put it up to *dem* every time."

"Exactly," agreed Madison. "It's their move every minute—make them feel that if they don't get what they're after it's their own fault—that it's their own lack of faith that's to blame. And the longer they have to wait to see the Patriarch the more they become impressed that faith is necessary, and—oh, well, psychology is the greatest jollier of them all."

"Eh?" inquired the Flopper. "I ain't on dere, Doc."

"It's very simple. They'll want to convince themselves that they *have* got faith, that it's all bottled up and ready to have the cork drawn when called for, and they'll prove it to themselves by laying an offering upon the shrine as evidence of faith *before* the goods are delivered."

"I gotcher!" said the Flopper enthusiastically. "Why, say, Doc, dat's de way I'd do meself—swipe me, if I wouldn't!"

"That's the way nearly everybody would do," Madison laughed. "There's at least a few similar kinks common to our noble race—we're busy most of the time trying to fool ourselves one way or another. Well, that's about all. I can't lay out a program for every minute of the day—you and Helena have got to use your heads and work along that general idea. You play up your gratitude strong. And, oh, yes—keep the altar-box well baited. Let Helena put some of those near-rhinestone rings and joujabs in until we collect some genuine ones, and then keep the genuine ones going—change every day for variety, you know. And take the silver money out every time you see any in—not that we scorn it in the great aggregate, far from it—it's just psychology again, Flopper. I went to church once and sat beside a duck with a white waistcoat and chop whiskers who wore the dollar-sign sticking out so thick all over him that you couldn't see anything else; and when it came time for collection he peeled a bill off a roll the size of a house and waited for the collection-plate to come along. But he got his eye on the plate a couple of pews ahead and it was full of coppers and chicken feed, and he did the palming act with the bill slicker than a faro dealer and whispered to me to change a quarter for him."

"And did you?" asked the Flopper.

"Oh, wake up, Flopper!" grinned Madison; then, suddenly: "Hello! Who's that?"

Across the lawn, coming through the row of maples from the direction of the wagon-track, appeared two figures.

"Dat's who," said the Flopper, after gazing an instant. "It's Helena an' Thornton."

"So it is," agreed Madison. "Get behind the trellis here, then—it wouldn't do for him to see me out here at this time of night."

They rose noiselessly from the bench and slipped quickly behind the trellis. Toward them, walking slowly, came the two figures, Helena leaning on Thornton's arm. Thornton was talking, but in too low a tone to be overheard. Then a silence appeared to fall between them and it was not until they reached the porch, close to Madison and the Flopper, that either spoke again.

Then Thornton held out his hand.

"Good night, Miss Vail—and good-by temporarily," he said. "I suppose I shall be gone four or five days; I'm leaving on the morning train, you know. I wish you'd go as often as you can to see Naida in the car while I'm away—will you? Her condition worries me, though she insists that she is completely cured, and she will not listen to any advice. I have an idea that she has overtaxed herself—apart from her hip disease, her heart was in a very critical state. You'll go to her, won't you?"

"Yes," said Helena, "of course I will."

Their voices dropped lower, and for a moment only a murmur reached Madison; and then, with another "Good night, Miss Vail," Thornton started back across the lawn.

Madison could hear Helena fumbling with the door-latch, and by the time she had succeeded in opening the door the retreating figure of Thornton was a safe distance away. Madison called in a whisper:

"Here, Helena! Wait a minute!"

There was a quick, startled little exclamation from the doorway and Helena came out hurriedly from the porch.

"Who's there?" she cried in a low voice. "Oh"—as they stepped into view—"you, Doc, and the Flopper! What were you doing behind that trellis?"

"Keeping out of Thornton's road," said Madison. "So he's going away, eh? What for?"

"Business," replied Helena. "Has to go to some meeting in Chicago—he's leaving his wife and the private car here. What did you come at this hour for?"

"Lines for the next act," said Madison; "but the Flopper's got it all, and he'll put you on." He stepped toward Helena and slipped his arm around her waist. "Come on, it's early yet, let's go for a little walk. The Flopper'll excuse us, and I—"

"I thought you said," Helena interrupted, disengaging herself quietly, "that we had to play the game to the limit and take no chances."

"Well, so I did," admitted Madison, and his arm crept around her again; "but I guess we've earned a little holiday, and—"

"'Nix on that,' I think was what you said," and Helena, with a queer little laugh, drew away again. "And I really think you were right, Doc—we ought to play the game without breaking the rules, and so—good night." She turned and ran from him into the cottage.

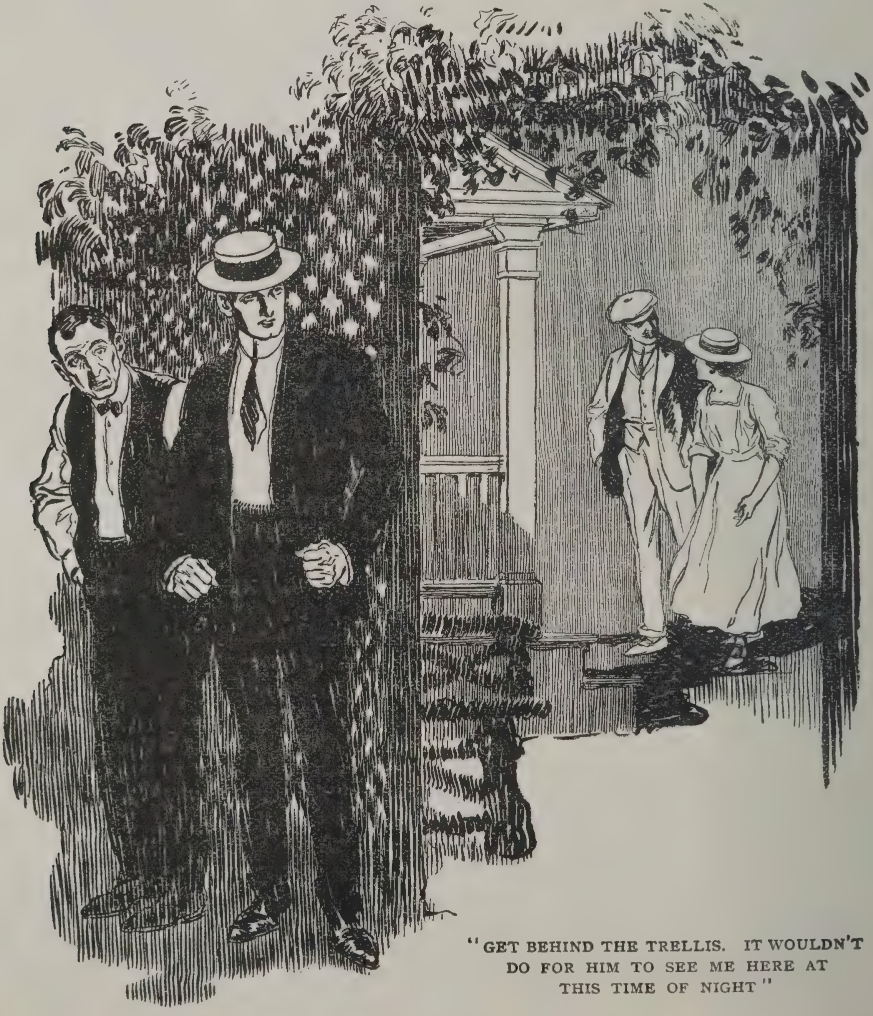
Madison stared after her in a sort of helpless state of chagrin.

"Mabbe," said the Flopper, "mabbe she's lonely."

CHAPTER XV

A MIRACLE OVERDONE

Helena sat in the Patriarch's room; her piquant little face was pursed up into a scowl so daintily grim as to be almost ludicrous. The Patriarch, in his armchair, had been scrawling words upon the slate all evening—and she had been wiping them off! He scrawled another now—and mechanically, without looking at it, by way of answer she pressed his arm to appease him.



"GET BEHIND THE TRELLIS. IT WOULDN'T DO FOR HIM TO SEE ME HERE AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT"

She had been restless all day, and she was restless now. What had induced her to treat Madison the way she had the night before? Pique, probably. No; it wasn't pique. It was just getting back at him—and he deserved it. He hadn't seemed to mind it much, though—he had only laughed and teased her about it that morning when he had joined the Patriarch and herself in their walk along the beach.

With her chin in her hands, she began to study the Patriarch through half-closed eyes—deaf and dumb and blind — and somehow it all seemed excruciatingly funny, and she wanted to laugh hysterically. He seemed to sense the fact that she was looking at him, and with quick, instant intuition he smiled and reached out his hand toward her.

Unconsciously, involuntarily, she drew back; then, recovering herself the next instant, she took his hand. Now, why had she done that? What was the matter with her? Again she felt that sudden impulse to scream or laugh or shout or make some noise — it seemed as though she were penned in, smothered somehow, imprisoned.

What *was* the matter? Nerves? She had never known what nerves were in all her life! Couldn't she play the game and act her part without making a fool of herself? She had played a part all her life, hadn't she? Maybe it was quite a shock to her system to take a place among really good and simple folk!

She laughed a little shortly, then rose from her chair and began to walk up and down the room. The trouble was that the soft pedal was getting unbearable. This air of awed hush and solemnity morning, noon, and night, without anything to relieve it, was just a trifle too drastic and sudden a change in life for her to accept calmly and swallow in one dose without feeling any effects from it! If she could be transported now for an hour to, say, the Roost, or Heligman's and the turkey-trot, or the Rivoli, or any old place—except Needley, Maine!

"Gee!" said Helena to herself. "If I don't break loose and kick over the traces for a minute or two, I'll be clawing the bars of a dippy asylum before I'm through—and just listen to the sweet, girlish language I'm using. I'd like to bite something!"

HER CHIN IN HER HANDS, SHE BEGAN TO STUDY THE PATRIARCH

She turned impulsively to the door, stepped out into the hall, and called the Flopper from his room.

"Flopper, you go in there and stay with the Patriarch for a while," she ordered curtly. "I'm going down on the beach to yell."

"Yell?" repeated the Flopper, blinking helplessly.

"I'm going outside to yell—*yell*. You know what 'yell' means, don't you?" she snapped.

"Swipe me!" observed the Flopper, gazing at her anxiously. "Skirts is all de same — youse never know wot dey'll do next. Wot you wanter yell fer?"

"You mind your own business and do as you're told!" said Helena tartly. "Go in there and stay with the Patriarch."

"Sure." The Flopper was grinning a

little now. "Sure t'ing; but youse needn't get on yer ear about it. Cheer up, mabbe de Doc'll be out to-night, an' if he don't hear youse yellin' himself, will I tell him youse are out on de beach t'rowin' a fit?"

"No," Helena answered sharply; "tell him nothing—I'm out." Then, quite as quickly, changing her mind: "Yes; tell him I'm down there—or come and get me yourself," and she walked abruptly into her own room.

"Now wot do youse t'ink of dat?" inquired the Flopper of the universe. He blinked at the door she had closed in his face. "Say," he asserted with sublime inconsistency, "if Mamie Rodgers was like all de rest of dem, I'd t'row up me dukes before de gong rang." The Flopper went into the Patriarch's room and took the chair beside the other that Helena had vacated. "Swipe me, if I wouldn't!" he added fervently by way of confirmation.

Helena, in her own room, opened one of her trunks, lifted out the tray, worked down somewhat impatiently through several layers of yellow, paper-covered literature that would have made the classics on the Patriarch's book-shelves shrivel up in righteous horror, and finally produced a daintily jeweled little cigarette-case and match-box. She shoved the tray back, slammed the cover of the trunk down, snatched up a wrap, flung it over her head and shoulders, and left the cottage.

She ran down to the beach at top speed, as if she couldn't get there fast enough.

"And now I'm just going to yell and go crazy as much as ever I like!" panted Helena to the rollers.

Instead, she sat down with her back to a rock and opened her cigarette-case. She took out a cigarette, extracted a match from the box, lighted it, and flung both cigarette and match from her.

"I don't want to be crazy—I don't know what I want," said Helena petulantly. Her chin went into her hands and she stared wide-eyed at the breaking surf. "I wonder what it all means?" she murmured with a mirthless little laugh.

Her thoughts began to run riot. What *did* it all mean? What was this faith? There was, there *must* be something in it. There was the Holmes boy — suppose it *was* only some nervous disorder — well, something had risen superior to whatever it was and had *cured* him. There was Naida Thornton; true, she was ill again—her heart, Mr. Thornton had said—but she could still walk, a thing she had not been able to do for a long time until she came to Needley.

Helena laughed again—oh, it was a good game! The Doc had made no mistake about that; but then, when it came to planting anything, the Doc rarely did make a mistake. Fancy fifty thousand dollars in one haul! The bank had sent her a pass-book with that amount to her credit. And that was only the beginning; hardly anybody had come yet, and already there was several hundred dollars more in real money that she had handed over to Madison from the offering-box.

Money! They'd have more money than they'd know what to do with before they got through; there was nothing the matter with the game, all there was to do was to play it to a finish. And there wasn't the slightest risk about it, everything was given voluntarily.

Oh, the game was all right; but somehow she wasn't happy, not nearly so happy as she had been in New York, even in lean periods when she and the Doc had been pressed for funds. But, anyway, then they had been together and fought and laughed and loved and quarreled through flush times and bad.

Maybe that was it! The Doc! Of course, she loved him—she had loved him ever since she had known him. There was no secret about that; she loved him fiercely, passionately, more than she loved anything else in the world, with all the love she was capable of—more than he loved her—he seemed to accept her, too often, so casually, so indifferently, so much as a matter of course. He was so confidently and complacently sure of her—and she was not at all sure of him. She was only sure that he was quite right in being sure—she couldn't help loving him if she tried.

She had hardly seen anything of him since that night in the Roost before he had left for Needley, and he hadn't seemed to care much whether she did or not. That talk about playing the game and taking no chances was all bosh—there had been plenty of chances where it wouldn't have hurt the game any. Perhaps the little jolt she had given him last night, turning the tables a bit, would wake him up a bit. Perhaps, as the Flopper had said, he would come out to-night, and—

"Helena! Helena!"

Helena sat suddenly upright—the noise of the surf muffled the sound of the voice, but that was probably Doc now—she could hear footsteps running from the direction of the cottage. Deliberately Helena leaned back again against the rock, took out a cigarette and, with no attempt to shade the flame of the match, rather to use it as a challenging beacon, held it to the cigarette—but for the second time she flung both match and cigarette hurriedly away. It wasn't Madison at all—it was only the Flopper.

"Say!" he gasped, blowing hard. "Why can't youse answer when ye're called? Wot you tryin' ter do—light a bonfire ter save yer voice? Say, youse wanter get a wiggle on—beat it—quick! Dey're after you."

"What?" cried Helena sharply, jumping to her feet. "After me? Who? What do you mean?"

"I dunno," said the Flopper with sudden imperturbability, and evidently quite pleased with the agitation he had caused. "He talks like his mouth was full, an' he's got a scare t'rown inter him so's his teeth have got de jiggles."

Helena caught the Flopper's arm and shook him angrily.

"What are you talking about—what is it?" she demanded fiercely.

"It's de porter from de private car," said the Flopper, wriggling away from her. "He drove out here. De lady's on de toboggan — sick. She's askin' fer youse, an'—"

Helena waited for no more. She raced to the cottage and around to the front. A wagon was standing before the porch; the negro porter on the seat.

"What is it, Sam?" she called anxiously as she came up. "Is Mrs. Thornton seriously ill?"

"Yas — yas'um, miss," Sam answered excitedly. "I done feel in mah bones she's gwine to die. Miss Harvey she done tole me to get a team an' drive foh you-all like de debbil."

Without waste of words Helena clambered in beside him.

"Then drive," she said shortly, "as fast as you can."

At first, as they drove along, Helena plied Sam with questions, and then lapsed into silence. The man did not know very much, only that Mrs. Thornton had been taken suddenly ill and that the nurse had sent him on the errand. A turmoil of conflicting emotions filled Helena's mind, obtruding upon her anxiety, for she had grown to care a great deal for Naida Thornton — this was a complication that Doc Madison must know about.

Thornton had left that morning and was already far away; the newspapermen, or some of them, at least, were still in the town, and there were so many things else. They all came crowding upon her as she clung to her seat in the jolting wagon. But Doc must know—that rose a paramount consideration. It seemed an age, an eternity, before they stopped finally at the station.

She sprang out and turned to Sam.

"Sam," she directed hurriedly, "you go back to the Congress Hotel and get Mr. Madison. Mr. Madison is a friend of Mr. Thornton's, you know. Go about it quietly —you needn't let any one know what you came for. You can tell Mr. Madison what the trouble is, and tell him that I sent you, and that I am here. Do you understand?"

"Yas'um, mum," said Sam impressively. "Just you done leab all that to me, missy."

Across the track, on the siding, the private car was dimly lighted, the window curtains down. Helena crossed the track and mounted the steps. As she reached the platform Miss Harvey, who had evidently heard her coming, opened the door and drew her quietly inside.

A glance at the nurse's face brought a sudden sinking in Helena's heart. Miss Harvey, capable, controlled, grave, smiled at her a little sadly.

"I sent for you, Miss Vail," she said in a low tone, "because Mrs. Thornton has been asking for you incessantly ever since the attack came on, three-quarters of an hour ago."

"You mean," said Helena, "that—that there is—"

"No hope," the nurse finished. "I am afraid there is none—it is her heart. The condition has been aggravated by her activity during the last few days since she has been able to walk, though I have done everything within my power to keep her quiet."

Miss Harvey laid her hand on Helena's arm.

"There is one thing, Miss Vail, I feel that I must say to you, in justice both to you and to myself, before you see her. Whatever my personal ideas may be of what has taken place here, my professional duty as a nurse demanded that I send for a doctor at once, and I want you to know that that is what I did, though I have not been successful in getting one. There is no doctor here, so I telegraphed; but the doctor at Barton's Mills is away."

"Yes," assented Helena mechanically.

"I just wanted you to understand," said Miss Harvey. "Will you come and see Mrs. Thornton now?"

"Does she know," whispered Helena as she followed the nurse down the corridor of the car—"does she know that—how ill she is?"

"Yes," Miss Harvey answered simply. She stopped before a compartment door, opened it softly and, stepping aside, motioned Helena to enter.

A little cry rose to Helena's lips that she choked back somehow, and a mist for a moment blinded her eyes; then she was kneeling beside the brass bed and was holding in both her own the hand that was stretched out to her.

"Helena dear, I am so glad you came," said Mrs. Thornton faintly. "I—I am not going to get better, and there are some things I want to say to you."

"Oh, but you are," returned Helena quickly, smiling bravely now. "You mustn't say that."

Mrs. Thornton shook her head.

"Dear," she said, "I know. And I know that what I have to say I must say quickly." Her voice seemed to grow suddenly stronger with a great earnestness. "Listen, dear. This must not make any difference to this wonderful work that has just begun here. I was cured of my hip disease—perfectly cured—no one can deny that—this is my own fault; I have overdone it. I would not listen to reason—to do what I have done in the last few days, when for a year and a half I had never moved a step, was more than my heart could stand. I should have been more quiet; but I was so glad, so happy—and I wanted to tell everybody. I wanted all the world to know, so that others could find the joy that I had found."

She paused, and Helena sought for words that, somehow, would not come.

The nurse was bending over the bed on the other side, and Mrs. Thornton turned her head toward Miss Harvey now. She smiled gently, as though to rob her words of any possible hurt.

"Nurse, I want to be alone with Miss Vail for just a moment."

Miss Harvey, doubtful, hesitated.

"Only for a moment," pleaded Mrs. Thornton. "You can stay just outside the door."

Reluctantly Miss Harvey complied and left the room. Mrs. Thornton pressed Helena's hand tightly.

"Listen, dear, this must not make any difference. It—it is the one thing that will make me happy now. I—I have written a little note to Robert about it, to be given to him. Oh, if I could only have lived to help—I should have tried so hard to be worthy to have a part in it. Not like you, dear, with your sweetness and nobleness, for God seems to have singled you out for this, but just to have had a little part. How wonderful it would have been, bringing peace and health and gladness where only sorrow and misery were before, and—and—"

Mrs. Thornton's eyes closed and she lay for a moment quiet.

A blackness seemed to settle upon Helena — and how cold it was! She shivered. Her dark eyes, wide, tearless now, stared, startled, dazed at the white face on the pillow crowned with its mass of golden hair. Her sweetness! Her nobleness! Helena's lips half parted and her breath came in quick, fierce little gasps. It seemed as though she had been struck a blow that she could not quite understand, because somehow it had numbed her senses, only there was a hurt that curiously seemed to mock as it stabbed with pain.

"There is Robert." Mrs. Thornton spoke again. "I am sure he will do as I have asked him to do about this, but—but you can have a great deal of influence with him. It — it perhaps may seem a strange thing to say, but I pray that you two may be brought very close to each other. Robert needs a good, true woman so much in his life, and I—we—we—my illness—we have never had a home in its truest sense. Yes, it is strange for me, perhaps, to talk like this, but it is in my heart. I would like to think of you both engaged in this wonderful work together."

Again, through exhaustion, Mrs. Thornton stopped, and Helena, from gazing at the other's pallid countenace in a sort of involuntary, frightened fascination, dropped her head suddenly upon the bedspread and hid her face.

"I AM NOT GOING TO GET BETTER, AND THERE ARE SOME THINGS I WANT TO SAY TO YOU"

Mrs. Thornton's hand found Helena's head and rested upon it.

"I would like to see Robert happy," she murmured after a little silence. "Riches do not make happiness—they are so sad and empty a thing when the heart is empty. I know he would be happy with you; he has spoken so much of you lately; perhaps—perhaps—"

Mrs. Thornton's voice was very faint; the words reached Helena plainly enough as words, but they seemed to reach her consciousness in an unreal, unnatural, blunted way, comalike, pregnant of significance, yet with the significance itself elusive, evading her.

"A good woman—" whispered Mrs. Thornton. "I have tried to be a good woman—but—but my life, our wealth, our position have made it so artificial. You have never known these things, dear—and so you are just as God made you—a good woman, so pure, so wonderful in your freshness and your innocence. Robert's life has been so barren. I would like to know that—that it will not always be so. Oh, if it could only be that you and he should carry on this great, glad work together—and love should come into his life and yours—and sunshine; promise me that—"

The voice died away. Helena, with head still buried, waited for Mrs. Thornton to speak again. It seemed she waited for a great length of time—and yet there was no such thing as time. It seemed as though she were transported to a place of great and intense blackness where it was miserably cold and chill, and she stood alone and lost, and strove to find her way—and there was no way—only blackness everywhere, immeasurable.

She lifted her head suddenly, desperately, to shake the unreality from her, and her eyes fell upon the gentle face, peaceful, smiling, calm, and so *still*—and a startled, frightened cry rang from her lips.

There was the quick, hurried rush of some one coming into the room, and the nurse brushed by her and bent instantly over the bed; after that—quite soon after that, it seemed, and yet it might have been quite a little while—she found herself outside in the corridor, and the nurse was speaking to her.

"Sam is still out there," said Miss Harvey gently. "I told him to keep the team. You cannot help me, and I want you to go home. And will you ask Sam to go for Mr. Madison at the hotel on the way back? I do not know who else I can call upon for advice."

"I've sent for him already," said Helena numbly.

"Have you?" Miss Harvey said. "That was very thoughtful of you; I'm sure he'll be here presently, then. And now, dear, it is much better that you should go."

There were no tears in Helena's eyes as she stepped down from the car vestibule to the tracks—only a drawn misery in her face. That was Doc over there, pacing up and down on the platform in the darkness. Wasn't it weird the way his cigar glowed bright and then went out and then glowed bright again—like a gigantic firefly?

She was across the tracks before he saw her; then, hurrying forward, he helped her to the platform.

"Well?" he asked quickly.

Helena did not answer.

Madison took the cigar from his lips, leaned forward, and peered into Helena's face—then drew back with a low whistle.

"Dead?" he said.

Helena nodded.

"Miss Harvey wants to see you," she told him.

"Say," observed Madison slowly—"first crack out of the box, this looks bad, don't it? If this gets around here without a muffler on it, it might make the railroad companies hang fire with those circulars for excursion rates to Needley—what?"

"I—I think I hate you!" Helena cried out suddenly, passionately. "She's—she's dead; and that's all you think about!"

Madison stared at the girl for a moment calmly.

"Now, look here, Helena," said he quietly; "don't get excited. Of course I'm sorry—I'm not a brute and I've got feelings—but I can't afford to lose my head. Something's got to be done, and done quick. We don't want this head-lined in every paper in the United States to-morrow morning; Thornton wouldn't want it, either. You say Miss Harvey wants to see me? Well, that'll help some; she'll probably do as she's told and—"

Madison paused abruptly, gazed abstractedly at the private car on the siding, and pulled at his cigar.

Helena watched him in silence—a little bitterly. That quick, clever, cunning brain of his was at work again—scheming—scheming—always scheming—and Naida Thornton was dead.

"I'll tell you," said Madison, speaking again as suddenly as he had stopped. "It's simple enough. There's a westbound train due in an hour or so; we'll couple the private car onto that and send it right along to Chicago. What the authorities don't know won't hurt them. There's no reason for anybody except Thornton to know what's happened till she gets there; I'll wire him. The main thing is that the car won't be here in the morning, and that'll take a little of the intimate touch of Needley off. It might well have happened on her way home—journey too much for her—left too soon—see? Thornton'll see it in the right light, because he's got fifty thousand dollars' worth of faith in what's going on here—get that? He won't want to harm the 'cause.' There'll be some publicity, of course; we can't help that, but it won't hurt much, and Thornton can gag a whole lot of it—he'd want to, anyway, for his own sake. Now then, kid, there's Sam over there; you pile into the wagon and go home, while I get busy, and don't you say a word about this, even to the Flopper."

And so Helena drove back to the Patriarch's cottage that night, a little, silent figure in the back seat of the wagon. Her hands were locked tightly together in her lap, and to her, as she drove over the peaceful, moonlit road and under the still, arched branches of the trees in the woods that hid the starlight, came again and again the words of one who had gone, who perhaps knew better now—"You are as God made you."

CHAPTER XVI

A FLY IN THE OINTMENT

THE days passed. And with the days, morning, noon, and night, they came by almost every train—the sick and suffering, the lame, the paralytics, and the maimed—a steady influx by twos and threes and fours — from north over the Canadian boundary-line, from the far West, and from the southernmost tip of the Florida coast.

No longer on the company's schedule

was Needley a flag-station—it was a regular stop, and its passenger-traffic returns were benign and pleasing things in the auditor's office. And it was an accustomed sight now, many times a day, what had once been a strange, rare spectacle, that slow procession wending its way from the station to the town, some carried, some limping upon crutches, all snatching at hope of life and health and happiness again. Needley, perforce, had become a vast boarding-house, as it were—there were few homes indeed that did not harbor their quota of those who sought the " cure."

But there were others, too, that came who were not sick, who had not faith, who came to laugh and peer and peek. Pleasure-yachts dropped their anchors in the cove around the headland from the Patriarch's cottage, and their dingeys brought women decked out *de rigueur* in middy blouses and sailor collars, and nattily attired gentlemen whose only claim to seamanship was the clothes they wore.

They came laughing, supercilious, tolerant, contemptuous, pitying the inanity of those they held less strongly minded than themselves who should be taken in by so glaring and monstrous a fake. They came because it was the rage, the thing to do, quite a necessary part of the summer's itinerary. But that they, should they have been sick, would ever have dreamed of coming here was too perfectly ridiculous an idea for words. How strange a thing is the human animal!

THEY CAME, LAUGHING, SUPERCILIOUS, TOLERANT, CONTEMPTUOUS

They came in their rather cruel, merciless gaiety, and they left sobered and impressed; the ladies holding their embroidered parasols at a less jaunty angle; the men with lightened pockets, their names enrolled in the contribution-book in that quiet, simple room, whose door was open, whose cash-box was unguarded, where none asked them either to enter or withdraw.

They came and found no air of charlatanism such as they had looked for, only a peaceful, unostentatious, patient atmosphere of sincerity that left them remorseful and abashed. They came and went, a source of revenue not thought of before by Madison; but a source that swelled the coffers to overflowing.

In three weeks from the night of Mrs. Thornton's death, which had had at least no visible effect on Needley, Needley was metamorphosed with a spontaneity, so to speak, that astounded even Madison himself, into something that approximated very closely in reality the word-picture he had drawn of it that night in the Roost.

Madison looked upon his work and saw that it was pleasing beyond his dreams. Money was pouring in; no single breath of suspicion came to disquiet him. Even the cures were working satisfactorily; even Pale Face Harry, who had become great friends with the farmer at whose house he boarded, and who now spent most of his time in the fields, was showing an improvement, for he coughed less. The Flopper was as happy as a lark, and Mamie Rodgers blushed now at mention of the name of Coogan.

Helena, demure, adored by all who saw her, went daily about her housework in the cottage and waited upon the Patriarch with gentle tenderness; while the Patriarch, docile, full of supreme trust and confidence in every one, radiant in Helena's companionship, was as putty in their hands. And so Madison looked upon his work and saw no flaw; but with the days he grew ill at ease.

" It's too easy," he told himself. " The whole show runs itself. Why, there's nothing to do but count the cash!"

And yet in his heart he knew that wasn't it—it was Helena. She was beginning to trouble him a little. She was playing the game, all right—playing it to the limit—and making a hit at every performance. Her name was on every tongue, and men and women alike spoke of her sweetness, her goodness, her loveliness.

Well, that was all right; Helena was a star no matter where you put her; but something was the matter. Helena wasn't the Helena of a month ago back in little old New York. He hadn't managed to get a dozen words with her since that night on the station platform without taking chances and gaining admission to the cottage through the Flopper's window after dark, and then she had held him at arm's length.

" The matter with me?" she had said. " There isn't anything the matter with me, is there? I'm—I'm playing the game."

It certainly couldn't be grief over Mrs. Thornton's death—she had begun to act that way before Mrs. Thornton died—that night when she came home with Thornton and he and the Flopper were behind the trellis. Thornton! Had Thornton anything to do with it, after all? No. Madison had laughed at the idea then, and he had much more reason to laugh at it now. Thornton was still in Chicago.

For three weeks this sort of thing occupied a large share of Madison's thoughts, and then one afternoon he smiled a little grimly and, leaving the hotel, started along the road toward the Patriarch's cottage.

" What Helena needs is a jolt!" said Madison to himself. " I guess her trouble is one of those everlasting feminine kinks that all women since Adam's wife have patted themselves on the back over because they think it's a dark veil of mystery that is beyond the acumen of brute man to understand. That's what the novelists write pages about—wade right in up to the armpits in it—feminine psychology. Great! And the women smile commiseratingly at the novelist—the idea of a man even pretending to understand them—kind of a blooming merry-go-round and everybody happy! Feminine psychology! I guess a little masculine kick-up is about the right dope! Why the deuce have I been standing for it? I don't have to. I don't have to go around making sheep's eyes at her—what? She wants grabbing up and being rushed right off her feet *à la* Roost, and—hello, Mr. Marvin, how are you to-day?"

He had halted beside a middle-aged man who was sitting on the grass at the roadside.

" Better, Mr. Madison, better," returned the man heartily. " Really very much better."

" Fine!" commented Madison.

" We all saw the Patriarch to-day—God bless him!" went on Marvin. " We've been waiting out there two days, you know—that woman with the bad back got up off her stretcher."

" Splendid!" exclaimed Madison enthusiastically. " And the glorious thing about it is that there's no reason why everybody can't be cured, if they'll only come here in the right spirit."

" That's so!" agreed Marvin. " None are so blind as those who won't see; they're in utter blackness compared with the physical blindness of that grand and marvelous man. I'm going home myself in another week—better than ever I was in my life. It was stomach with me, you know; doctors said there wasn't any chance except to operate, and that an operation was too slim a chance to be worth risking it."

He got up and laughed, care-free, joyous.

" God-given place down here, isn't it? Clean—that's it. Clean air, clean-souled people, clean everything you see or do or hear. Say, it kind of opens your eyes to real living, doesn't it? It's the luxuries and the worries and the pace and the fooleries that kill. Well, I'm going along back now to get some of Mrs. Perkins's cream—clean, rich cream—and home-made bread and butter. Imagine me with an appetite and able to eat!"

He laughed again, and Madison joined him in the laugh, slapping him a cordial good-by on the shoulder.

Madison started on once more, but now his progress was slow, frequently interrupted, for he stopped a score of times to exchange a few words with those whom he passed on the road. There were cheery faces everywhere, even those of the sufferers who straggled along coming back from the Patriarch's cottage. It was a cheery afternoon, warm and balmy and bright—everything was cheery. The farmers, for the moment their vocations changed, waved their whips at him and shouted friendly pleasantries as they drove by with those who were unable to make the trip from the Patriarch's unaided.

Madison began to experience a strange, exhilarating sense of uplift, a sort of rather commendatory and gratified feeling with himself. Marvin had hit it pretty nearly right with his " clean-wholesomeness " idea—it kind of made one feel good to be a part of it. Madison, for the time being, relegated Helena and his immediate mission to a secondary place in his thoughts.

Young girls, young men, middle-aged men, elderly women, all ages of both sexes he passed as he went along; some alone, some in couples, some in little groups, some on crutches, some in wheel-chairs, some walking without extraneous aid; he had turned into the woods now, and he could see them strewn out all along the wagon-track under the cool, interlacing branches overhead.

Now he stepped aside to let a wagon pass him, and answered the farmer's call and the smile of the occupants in kind; now some one stopped to tell him again the story of the afternoon—there had been cures that day and the Patriarch had come among them. Some laughed, some sang a little, softly, to themselves; all smiled, all spoke in glad, hopeful words, clean words—there seemed no base thought in any mind, only that cleanness, that wholesomeness that had so appealed to Marvin, that somehow Madison found he was taking a delight in responding to, and, because it afforded him whimsical pleasure, chose to pretend that he was quite a genuine exponent of it himself.

He reached the end of the wagon-track and paused involuntarily on the edge of the Patriarch's lawn as he came out from the trees. Like low, lulling music came the distant, mellowed noise of the breaking surf. And the cottage was a bower of green now, clothed in ivy and vine, upon the trellises the early roses were budding, the fragrance of growing things blended with the salt, invigorating breeze from the ocean.

And upon the lawn, flanked with its sturdy maples, all in leaf, that toned the sunshine in soft-falling shadows, stood or sat or reclined on cots the supplicants who still tarried though the Patriarch had gone. And now one came reverently out of the cottage door from that room that was never closed; now another went in — and still another.

Madison smiled suddenly, broadly, with immense satisfaction and contentment, and then his eyes fixed themselves quite as suddenly on the single-seated buggy that was coming toward him on the driveway across the lawn. That was Mamie Rodgers driving, and that was Helena beside her.

Madison recalled instantly the object of his visit, and instantly he whistled a rather surprised little air under his breath. How alluringly Helena's brown hair coiled in wavy wealth upon her head; there wasn't any need of rouge for color in the oval face; the dark eyes were soft and deep and glorious; and she sat there in a little white muslin frock as dainty as a medallion from a master's brush.

" Say," said Madison to himself, " I never quite got it before. Say, she's—she's lovely, and that's my Helena. It's no wonder Thornton stared at her that day we touched him for the fifty, and " — suddenly — " damn Thornton!"

But the buggy was beside him now, and he lifted his hat as Mamie Rodgers pulled up the horse.

" Good afternoon, Miss Rodgers," he said. " Good afternoon, Miss Vail—how is the Patriarch to-day?"

" He is very well, thank you," Helena answered, and, being custodian of the whip, brushed a fly off the horse's flank.

" I was just coming out to pay you a little visit," remarked Madison, trying to catch her eye.

" Oh, I'm *so* sorry!" said Helena sweetly, still busy with the fly. " Mamie is going to take me for a drive, and afterward we are going to her house for tea."

" Oh!" muttered Madison a little blankly.

Helena smiled at him, nodded, and touched the horse with the whip, and then she leaned suddenly out toward him as the buggy started forward.

" Oh, Mr. Madison," she called, " I forgot

SOME ALONE, SOME IN COUPLES, SOME IN LITTLE GROUPS, SOME ON CRUTCHES, SOME IN WHEEL-CHAIRS, SOME WALKING WITHOUT EXTRANEOUS AID to tell you! I had a letter from Mr. Thornton to-day—and he's coming back to-morrow."

CHAPTER XVII

IN WHICH HELENA TAKES A RIDE

The wind kissed Helena's face, bringing dainty color to her cheeks, tossing truant wisps of hair this way and that, as the car swept onward. But she sat strangely silent now beside Thornton at the steering-wheel.

It seemed to her that she was living, not her own life, not life as she had known and looked upon it in the years before, but living, as it were, in a strange, suspended state that was neither real nor unreal; as in a dream that led her, now through cool, deep forests, beside clear, sparkling streams where all was a great peace and the soul was at rest, now into desolate places where misery had its birth and shame was—where there was fear, and the mind stood staggered and appalled and lost, and knew not how to guide her that she might flee from it all.

At moments most unexpected, as now, when motoring with Thornton in the car he had brought back with him on his return to Needley, when laughing at the Flopper's determined pursuit of Mamie Rodgers, when engaged in the homely, practical details of housekeeping about the cottage, there came flashing suddenly upon her the picture of Mrs. Thornton lying on the brass bed in the car compartment, that night, every line of the pale, gentle face as vivid, as actual as though it were once more before her in reality; and in her ears rang again, stabbing her with their unmeant condemnation, those words of sweetness, love, and purity that held her up to gaze upon herself in ghastly, terrifying mockery.

It stupefied her, bewildered her, frightened her. She seemed, for days and weeks now, to be drifting with a current that, eddying, swirling, swept her this way and that. How wonderful it was, this life she was now leading, compared with the old life—so full of the better things, the better emotions, the better thoughts that she had never known before! How monstrous in its irony that she was leading it to *steal*, that she might play her part in a criminal scheme for a criminal end!

And yet, somehow, it did not all seem sham, this part she played—and that very thought, too, frightened her. Why was it now that Madison's oft-attempted, and as oft-repulsed, kiss upon her lips was something from which she shrank and battled against, no longer from a sense of pique or to bring him to his knees, but because something new within her, intangible, that she did not understand, rose up against it? Why did she do this—she, who had known the depths, who had known no other guide or mentor than the turbulent, passionate love she had yielded him and in her abandonment had once found contentment? Was her love for him gone? Or, if it was not that—what was it?

What was it? A week, another, two more, a month had slipped away since Thornton had returned, and there had been so much of genuineness crowded into this sham part she played that it seemed at times it must be genuine. She had come to love that little room of hers—love it for its dear simplicity, the white muslin curtains, the rag mat, the patch-quilt on the bed; those daily duties of a woman that she had never done before, that she had at first looked at askance, brought now a sense of keen, housewifely pride; the gentle patience of the Patriarch, his love for her, his simple trust in her had found a quick and instant response in her own heart, and daily her affection for him had grown.

And there was Thornton—this man beside her now whose companionship somehow she seemed to crave, who, in his grave, quiet manliness, seemed a sort of inspiration to her, who appeared in a curious way to appease a new hunger that had come to her for contact with better thoughts and better ideals.

What was it? Environment? Yes, there must be something in that. It was having its effect even on Pale Face Harry and the Flopper. What was it that Harry, a surprisingly lusty farm-hand now, had said to her a week or so ago?

"Say, Helena, do you ever feel that while you was trying to kid the crowd about this living on the square, you was kind of getting kidded yourself? I dunno! I ain't coughed for a month—honest. But it ain't only that. Say—I dunno! Do you ever feel that way?"

Yes; there must be something in environment. The old life had never brought her thoughts such as these, thoughts that had been with her now almost since the first day she had come to Needley—this disquiet, this self-questioning, these sudden floods of condemnatory confusion; and, mingling with them, a startled thrill, a strange, half-glad, half-premonitory awakening, a vague pronouncement that innately it might be true that she was not what she *really* was—but what all those around her held her to be — what Mrs. Thornton had said she was—and—

Her fingers closed with a quick, fierce pressure on the arm-rest of her seat—and she shifted her position with a sudden, involuntary movement.

Thornton, a road-map tacked on a piece of board and propped up at his feet, raised his head and, self-occupied himself, had apparently not noticed her silence, for he spoke irrelevantly.

" I hope you won't mind if the road is a bit rougher than usual for a few miles," he said; " but you know we decided we didn't like the looks of the weather at tea-time, and, according to the map, which labels it ' rough but passable,' this is a short cut that will lop off about ten miles and take us back to Needley through Barton's Mills."

" Of course I don't mind," Helena answered. " How far are we from Needley?"

" About thirty-five miles or so," Thornton replied. " Say, an hour and a half with any kind of going at all. We ought to be back by nine."

Helena nodded brightly and leaned back in her seat. Rather than objecting to the short cut that Thornton had begun to negotiate, now that she gave her attention to it, she found the road to be quite the prettiest bit she had seen in the whole afternoon's run; miles and miles without the sign of even a farmhouse—just the great Maine forests, so majestic and grand in their solitude. They had explored much of the country together in the little runabout—nearly every day a short spin somewhere; to-day a little more ambitious run—the whole afternoon—and tea, a picnic tea, an hour or more back, in a charming glade beside a little brook.

" Oh, this is perfectly lovely!" she exclaimed; and then, with a breathless laugh, as a bump lifted her out of her seat: " It *is* rough—isn't it?"

Thornton laughed and slowed down.

" I don't fancy it's used much, except in the winter for logging. But if the map says we can get through, I guess we're all right; there's about an eight-mile stretch of it."

It was growing dusk, and the shadows, fanciful and picturesque, were deepening around them. Now it showed a solid mass of green ahead, and, like a sylvan path, the road, converging in the distance, lost itself in a wall of foliage; now it swerved rapidly, this way and that, in short curves, as though trying to find its way.

A half-hour passed. Thornton stopped the car, got down and lighted his lamps, then started on again. The going had seemed to be growing steadily worse—the road, as Thornton had said, was little more, indeed, than a logging-trail through the heart of the woods; and now, deeper in, with increasing frequency, the tires slipped and skidded on damp, moist earth that at times approached very nearly to being oozy mud.

Silence for a long time had held between them. It was taking all Thornton's attention to guide the car.

" ' Rough but passable '!" he laughed once, clambering back to his seat after clearing away a dead tree-trunk from the path. " But there's no use trying to go back, as we must be half-way through, and it can't be any worse ahead than it's been behind. I'd like to tell the fellow that made this map something!"

And then upon Helena, just why she could not tell, began to steal an uneasiness that frightened her a little. It had grown suddenly intensely dark — quicker than the slow, creeping change of dusk blending softly into night. Sort of eery, it seemed—and a wind springing up and rustling through the branches made strange noises all about.

They seemed to be shut in by a wall of blackness on every hand, except ahead, where, like great, streaming eyes of fire, the powerful lamps shot out their rays, making weird color effects in the forest—huge tree-trunks loomed a dead drab, like mute sentinels, grim and ominous, that barred their way; now, in the full glare, the foliage took on the softest fairy shade of green; now tapering off, heavier in color, it merged into impenetrable black; and, with the jouncing of the car, the light rays, jiggling up and down, gave an unnatural semblance as of moving, animate things before them — a myriad of them, ever retreating, but ever marshaling their forces again as though to oppose the car's advance.

What was there to be afraid of? She tried to laugh at herself—it was perfectly ridiculous. A little bit of rough road—the forest that she loved around her—even if it was very dark. They would come out eventually somewhere on the main road to Barton's Mills—that was all there was to it. Meanwhile, it was quite an experience, and she had every confidence in Thornton.

She glanced at him now. It was too dark to get more than an indistinct outline of the clean-cut profile; but there was something inspiriting in the alert, self-possessed, competent poise of his body as he crouched well forward over the wheel, his eyes never lifting from the road ahead.

They appeared to be going a little faster now, too—undoubtedly the way was getting better. What was there to be afraid of? It didn't make it any more pleasant for Thornton, who was probably reproaching himself rather bitterly for having been tempted by the "short cut," to have her sit and mope beside him!

She began to hum an air softly to herself—and then laughingly sang a bar or two aloud.

Thornton shot a quick, appreciative glance at her and nodded, joining in the laugh.

"By Jove!" he said approvingly. "That sounds good to me. I was afraid this beastly stretch, bumping along in the dark, was making you miserable."

"Miserable!" exclaimed Helena. "Why, the idea! What is there to be miserable about? We'll get through after a while—and the road's better now than it was, anyhow—isn't it?"

"Better?"

"You're running faster."

"Oh—er—yes, of course," said Thornton quickly. "I wasn't thinking of what I said. I—"

He stopped suddenly as Helena lifted her hand to her face.

"Why, it's beginning to rain," she said.

"Yes; I'm afraid so," he admitted. "I was hoping we would get out of here before it came."

"Oh!" said Helena.

"And the worst of it is," he added hurriedly, "there's no top to the car, and you've no wraps."

"Perhaps it won't be anything more than a shower," said Helena hopefully.

"Perhaps not," he agreed. "Anyway"—he stopped the machine and took off his coat—"put this on."

"No — please," protested Helena. "You'll need it yourself."

"Not at all," said Thornton cheerily. "And that light dress of yours would be soaked through in no time."

He held the coat for her and she slipped it on—and his hand around her shoulder and neck, as he turned the collar up and buttoned it gently about her, seemed to linger as it touched her throat, and yet linger with the most curious diffidence—a sort of reverence.

Helena suddenly wanted to laugh—and, quick in her intuition, as suddenly wanted to cry. It wasn't much — only a little touch. It didn't mean love or passion or feeling — only that, unconsciously in his respect, he held her up to gaze upon herself again in that mocking mirror where all was sham.

They started on—Thornton silent once more, busy with the car; Helena, her mind in riot, with no wish for words.

The rain came steadily in a drizzle. She could feel her dress growing damp around her knees—and she shivered a little. How strangely wonderful the rain-beads looked on their background of green leaves where the lamps played upon them; they seemed to catch and hold and reflect back the light in a quick, passing procession of clear, sparkling crystals.

But it was raining more heavily now, wasn't it? The drops were no longer clinging to the leaves; they were spattering dull and lusterlessly to the ground. And Thornton seemed suddenly to be in trouble; he was bending down working at something. How jerkily the car was moving! And now it stopped.

Thornton swung out of his seat to the ground.

"It's all right!" he called out reassuringly. "I'll have it fixed in a minute."

It was muddy enough, and the ruts, holding the rain, were regular wheel-traps. Apart from any other trouble, Thornton did not like the prospect—and, away from Helena now, his face was serious. He cranked the engine—no result. He tried it again with equal futility; then, going to the tool-box, he took out his electric flash-light and, lifting the engine-hood, began to peer into the machinery. Everything seemed all right. He tried the crank again; the engine, like some cold, dead thing, refused to respond.

"What's the matter?" Helena asked him from the car.

"I don't know," Thornton answered lightly. "I haven't found out yet; but don't you worry—it's nothing serious. I'll have it in a jiffy."

Helena's knowledge of motor-cars and engine trouble was not extensive.

"Maybe there's no gasoline," she suggested helpfully.

"Nonsense!" returned Thornton with a laugh. "I told Babson to see that the tank was full before he brought the car around; he wouldn't forget a thing like that."

Thornton, nevertheless, tested the gasoline tank.

"Well?" inquired Helena, breaking the silence that followed.

"There is no—gasoline," said Thornton heavily.

Neither spoke for a moment. There was no sound but the steady drip from the leaves. Then Helena forced a laugh.

"Isn't it ridiculous?" she said. "That is what one is always making fun of others for. I—I don't think it's going to stop raining—do you? And we're miles and miles from anywhere. What *do* people do when they're caught like this?"

Thornton did not answer at once. Bitterly reproachful of himself, he stood there coatless in the rain. If it had been a breakdown, an accident that was unavoidable, a little of the sting might have gone out of the situation—but *gasoline!* This was rank, blatant, glaring, inexcusable idiocy. Not on his part, perhaps—but that did not lessen his responsibility.

They were miles, as she had said, from anywhere; four miles at least in either direction from the main road, and as many more probably after that from any farmhouse—he remembered that for half an hour before they had turned into the "short cut" they had seen no sign of habitation—and what lay in the other direction, ahead, would in all probability be the same. They were up in the timber regions—the heart of them. Helena couldn't walk miles in the rain with the roads in a vile condition, and growing viler every minute as the rain sank in and the mud grew deeper. And then another thought came now, sharp and quick, engulfing the mere discomfort of a miserable night spent there in the woods. The clatter of busy, gossiping tongues seemed already to be dinning their abominable noises in his ears. And that he—that he—that *he* should be the cause of it!

"What *do* people do when they're caught like this?"

In their innocence there seemed an unfathomed depth of irony in her words; but as he unconsciously repeated them they cleared his brain and brought him suddenly to face the immediate practical problem that confronted them. What was to be done?

"Shall—shall I get out?" she called to him, a hint of reminder in her tones that she had spoken to him before and received no answer.

Thornton moved back to the side of the car.

"Miss Vail," he said contritely, "I—I don't know what to say to you for getting you into this. I—"

"I know," she interrupted quickly, leaning over the side of the car and placing her hand on his arm. "Don't try to say anything. It's not your fault—it's not either of our faults. Now tell me what you think the best thing is to do, and you'll see, I'll make the best of it—there's no use being miserable about it."

"You're a game little woman!" he said earnestly, quite unnecessarily clasping the hand on his arm and wringing it to indorse his verdict. "And that makes it a lot easier, you know. Well, then, we might as well face the whole truth at one fell swoop. We're up against it"—he laughed cheerfully—"hard. It's miles to anywhere—we don't know where 'anywhere' is—and, of course, you can't walk aimlessly around in the mud and rain."

"N-no," she said thoughtfully. "I suppose there's no sense in that."

"And, of course, you can't sit out here in the wet all night."

"That sounds comforting, propitious even," commented Helena.

"Quite!" agreed Thornton, laughing again. "Well, you wait here a moment, and I'll see if I can't knock up some sort of shelter. I used to be pretty good at that kind of thing."

"And I'll help," announced Helena, preparing to get out.

"By keeping at least your feet dry," he

amended. "No — please. Just stay where you are, Miss Vail. You'll get as much protection here from the branches overhead as you will anywhere, and you'll be more comfortable."

She watched him as he disappeared into the woods, and after that, like a flitting will-o'-the-wisp, watched his flash-light moving about among the trees. Then, presently, the cheery blaze of a fire from where he was at work sprang up, and she heard the crackle of resinous pine knots; then a great thrashing about, the snapping of branches as he broke them from larger limbs, and a rapid fire of small talk from him as he worked.

"I CAN CARRY YOU," HE SAID, AND GATHERED HER IN HIS ARMS

Helena answered him more or less mechanically; her mind, roving from one consideration of their plight to another, had caught at a certain view-point and was groping with it. They were stalled more effectively than any accident to the car could have stalled them — they were there for the night; there seemed no escape from that. But there was nothing to be afraid of. She had no fears about passing the night alone with him here in the woods—why should she? *Why should she!* She laughed low, suddenly, bitterly. Why should she, even if he were other than the man he was, even if he were of the lowest type! Fear—of *that!*

A yearning, so intense as for an instant to leave her weak, swept upon her—a yearning full of pain, of shame, of remorse, of hopelessness—dear God, if only she might have had the *right* to fear! Then passion seized her in wild, turbulent unrestraint — hatred for this clean-limbed, pure-minded man, who flaunted all that his life stood for in her face—hatred for everybody in this life of hers, for all were good save her—hatred, miserable, unbridled hatred for herself.

And then it passed, the mood—and she tried to think more calmly, still answering him as he called from the woods. She had seen a great deal of Thornton lately. He had been kind and thoughtful and considerate — nothing more. More! What more could there have been?

Love! There was something of mockery in that, wasn't there? Everything she thought about lately, every way her mind turned, seemed to hold something of mockery now. Of course, Mrs. Thornton's words expressing the wish that she and Thornton might come together had been often enough with her—mockingly again!—but Thornton could have known nothing of that; so, after all, what did that matter?

She had snatched at every opportunity to motor with Thornton despite Doc's protests—protests that had grown sullen and angry of late; snatched at the opportunities eagerly, as she would snatch at a breath of air where all else stifled her; snatched at them because they took her out of herself temporarily, away from everything, where everything at times seemed to be driving her mad.

Hate Thornton! No, of course she didn't hate him; she had thought that a moment ago because—because her brain was—was—oh, she didn't know—so tired and weary, and she was cold now and quite wet. She didn't hate him; she even—

" All ready now—house to let, furnished!" he was calling out, laughing as he came thrashing through the undergrowth. " Excellent situation, high altitude, luxuriant pine grove surrounds the property, and—and "—he had halted beside the car and opened the door—" what else do they say?"

Helena caught his spirit — or, rather, forced herself to do so. It wasn't quite fair that one of them should do all the pretending.

" Flies," she laughed. " They always speak of flies in Maine."

" None!" said Thornton promptly. " There hasn't been one since the house was built. Now, then, Miss Vail—" He held out his arms.

" Oh, but really, I can walk!"

" And I can carry you," he said—and, from the step, he gathered her in his arms.

And then, as she lay there passively at first, she seemed to sense again that curious diffidence, that gentleness, like the touch upon her throat of a little while ago, though now he held her in both his arms. How strong he was—and, oh, how miserably wet!—her hand around his shoulder felt the thin shirt clinging soggily to his arm. Yes, she was glad he hadn't let her walk; it wasn't far, but she would have had to force her way continually through bushes that scattered showers from their dripping leaves, and under foot she could hear his boots squash through the mud. And then suddenly it happened; the trees, just a yard or so from the fire, were thick together, tangled; she bent her head quickly, instinctively, to avoid a low-hanging branch, as he for the same reason swerved a little—and their cheeks lay close-pressed against each other's, her hair sweeping his forehead, their lips mingling one another's breaths. He seemed to stumble; then his arms closed about her in a quick, fierce pressure, clasping her, straining her to him—relaxed as suddenly—and then he had set her down inside the shelter he had built.

Quick her breath was coming now, and across the fire for a moment she met his eyes. His face was gray, and his hands at his sides were clenched.

" I'll—I'll get the seat out of the car," he said hoarsely. " It will help to make things more comfortable." And, turning abruptly, he started back for the road again.

Helena did not move. Mechanically her eyes took in the little hut, crude, but rainproof at least; branches heaped across two forked limbs for a roof, the trunk of a big tree for the rear wall, branches thrust upright into the ground for the sides—the whole a little triangular-shaped affair. The fire blazed in front just within shelter at the entrance; and beside it was piled quite a little heap of fuel that he had gathered.

He came back bringing the leather-upholstered seat, shook the rain from it, and dried it with the help of the fire and his handkerchief—then set it down inside the hut. His face was turned from her; and as he spoke, breaking an awkward silence, his voice was conscious, hurried.

" I'm not going to be gone a minute more than I can help, Miss Vail. It's mighty rough accommodation for you, but there's one consolation at least—you'll be perfectly safe."

Helena seated herself and held her skirt to the fire.

" Gone!" she said a little dully. " Where are you going?"

" Why, to get help, of course," he told her.

"Help!" She shook her head. "You don't know where to find any; you only know for a certainty that there isn't any within miles."

"I know there's a house back on the main road," he said. "I noticed it as we came along."

"That's seven or eight miles from here," she returned. "And it's raining harder now than ever—mud up to your ankles—it would take you hours to reach it."

"Possibly two, or two and a half," he said lightly.

"Yes; and another two at least to get back. I won't hear of you doing any such thing; you are wet through now. It's far better to wait for daylight, and then probably the storm will be over."

"But don't you see, Miss Vail"—his voice was suddenly grave, masterful—"don't you see that there is no other thing to do?"

"No," said Helena. "I don't see anything of the kind. I won't have you do anything like that for me—it's not to be thought of."

Thornton stooped, placed a knot upon the fire, straightened up—and faced her.

"It's awfully good of you to think of me," he said in a low tone; "but, really, it won't be half as bad as you are picturing it in your mind. And really"—he hesitated, fumbling for his words—"you see—that is—what other people might say—your—reputation—"

With a sudden cry, white-faced, Helena was on her feet, staring at him, her hands clutched at her bosom—a wild, demoniacal, mocking orgy in her soul. Her reputation! It seemed she wanted to scream out the words—*her reputation!*

Thornton's face flushed with a quick-sweeping flood of crimson.

"I'm a brute—a brute with a blundering tongue!" he cried miserably. "You had not thought of that—and I made you. I could have found another excuse for going if I had only had wit enough. I was a brute once before to-night, and—" He stopped and for a moment stood there looking at her—stood in the firelight, his face white again even in the ruddy glow—and then he was gone.

Time passed without meaning to Helena. The steady patter of the rain was on the leaves, the sullen, constant drip of water to the ground, and now, occasionally, a rush of wind, a heavier downpour. She sat before the fire, staring into it, her elbows on her knees, her face held tightly in her hands, the brown hair, wet and wayward now, about her temples. Once she moved, once her eyes changed their direction—to fix them upon her sleeve in a strange, questioning surprise.

"I let him go without his coat," she said.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BOOMERANG

It was early afternoon as Madison, emerging from the wagon-track, and walking slowly, started across the lawn toward the Patriarch's cottage. He was in a mood that he made no attempt to define, except that it wasn't a very pleasant mood. Before Thornton had returned to Needley it had been bad enough; after that, with his infernal car, it had been—hell!

Madison's fists clenched and his gray eyes glinted angrily. His hands had been tied like a baby's—like a darned infant's! Helena was getting away from him farther every day, and he couldn't stop it without stopping the game! He couldn't tell Thornton that Helena belonged to him—*had* belonged to him! He couldn't even evidence an interest in what was going on. He had to put on a front, a suave, cordial, dignified front before Thornton—while he itched to smash the other's face to pulp! Hell, that's what it was—pure, unadulterated hell!

He couldn't get near Helena alone with a ten-foot pole, morning, noon, or night—she had taken good care of that. And he wanted Helena—he *wanted* her! It was an obsession with him now—at times driving him half crazy—and it didn't help any that he saw her grow more glorious, more beautiful, every day! Of course she knew she had him—had him where she knew he couldn't do a thing, where she could laugh at him, go the limit with Thornton if she liked. But, curse it, it wasn't only Thornton—that was what he could not understand—she had begun to keep away from him before ever Thornton had come back.

Madison was near the porch now and, raising his eyes, noted a supplicant going into the shrine-room — a woman, richly dressed, but in widow's weeds, who walked feebly. The game went on by itself once started; there were half a hundred more about the lawn! Like a snowball rolling down-hill, as he had put it at the Roost. The Roost! If he only had Helena back there for about a minute there'd be an end of this! She'd go a little too far one of these days, a little too far—it was pretty near far enough now—and then there'd be a show-down, game or no game, and somebody would get hurt in the smash, and—

He lifted his eyes again as some one came hurrying through the cottage door. It was the Flopper. And then, to his surprise, he found himself being pushed unceremoniously from the porch and pulled excitedly behind the trellis.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded angrily. "Are you crazy?"

"T'ank de Lord youse have showed up!" gasped the Flopper. "Say, honest, I can't do nothin' wid him—he's got me near bughouse."

"Who?" Madison scowled irritably.

"De Patriarch, of course. He's noivous, an' gettin' worse all de time. He won't eat an' he won't keep still. He wants Helena, an' he keeps writin' her name on de slate—he's got me going fer fair."

"Well, I'm not Helena!" growled Madison. "Why doesn't she go to him?"

"Now wouldn't dat sting youse!" ejaculated the Flopper. "How's she goin' to him when she ain't here?"

"Not here?" repeated Madison sharply. "Where is she?"

The Flopper looked down his nose.

"I dunno," said he.

Madison stared at him for a moment, then he reached out and caught the Flopper's arm in a sudden and far from gentle grip.

"Out with it!" he snapped.

"I dunno where she is," said the Flopper with some reluctance. "She ain't back yet, dat's all."

"Back from where?" Madison's grip tightened.

The Flopper blinked.

"Aw, wot's de use!" he blurted out, as though his mind, suddenly made up, brought him unbounded relief. "Youse'll find it out, anyhow. Say, she went off wid Thornton in de buzz-wagon yesterday, an' I put de Patriarch to bed last night 'cause she wasn't back, an' dat's wot's de matter wid him; she ain't showed up since, an' he's near off his chump, an'—fer God's sake let go my arm, Doc; youse're breakin' it!"

A sort of cold frenzy seemed to seize Madison. He was perfectly calm; he felt himself perfectly calm and composed. Off all night with Thornton, eh? Funny, wasn't it? She'd gone pretty far at last—gone the limit.

"Why didn't you send me word this morning?" Was that his own voice speaking? Well, he wouldn't have recognized it, but he was perfectly calm nevertheless.

"Fer God's sake let go my arm," whimpered the Flopper. "I—I ain't no squealer, dat's why."

Madison's hand fell away to his side. He felt a whiteness creeping to his face and lips, felt his lips twitch, felt the fingers of his hands curl in and the nails begin to press into the palms.

"Mabbe," suggested the Flopper timidly, "mabbe dere was an accident."

Madison made no answer.

The Flopper shifted from foot to foot and licked his lips, stealing frightened glances at Madison's face.

"Wot—wot'll I do wid de Patriarch?" he stammered miserably.

And then Madison smiled at him—not happily, but eloquently.

"Swipe me!" mumbled the Flopper, as he backed out from the trellis. "Dis love game's fierce — an' mabbe *I* don't know! 'Sposin' she'd been Mamie an' me the Doc—'sposin' it had!" He gulped hastily. "Swipe me!" said the Flopper with emotion.

Madison, motionless, watched the Flopper disappear. He wasn't quite so calm now, not so cool and collected and composed. He must go somewhere and think this out—somewhere where it would be quiet and he wouldn't be disturbed.

A step sounded on the path. Madison looked through the trellis. A man, with yellow, unhealthy skin and sunken cheeks, his head bowed, was passing in through the porch. It caught Madison with fierce, exquisite irony. Why not go there himself if he wanted quiet—the shrine-room—the place of meditation! Well, he wanted to *meditate!* He laughed jarringly. The shrine-room—for him! Great! Immense! Magnificent! Why not? That's what he had created it for—to meditate in!

He stepped inside. The woman whom he had seen enter a short while before was sitting in a sort of rigid, strained attitude in the far corner; the man who had just preceded him had taken the chair by the fireplace. They were the only occupants of the room. There was no sound save his own footsteps; neither of the others looked at him. There was quiet, a profound stillness, and the softened light from the shuttered window fell like a benediction upon the simplicity of the few plain articles that the room contained—the round rag mats upon the white-scrubbed floor; the hickory chairs, severe, uncushioned; the table, with its little japanned box and book.

Madison's eyes fixed themselves upon the japanned box as he leaned, arms folded, against the wall; a jewel, even in the subdued light, glowed crimson-warm where it nested on a crumpled bed of bank-notes; a ruby ring, the last contribution; it must have been the woman who had placed it there. Madison glanced at her involuntarily, but his thoughts were far away again in a moment.

Anger and a blind rage of jealousy were gripping him now. *Accident!* The thought only fanned his fury. Accident! Yes; it was likely—as an excuse! There would have been an accident, all right—leave that to them! Thornton, perhaps, wasn't the stamp of man to seek an adventure of that kind deliberately; perhaps he wasn't, and perhaps he was—you never could tell—but what difference did that make! *Helena was that kind of a woman,* though he'd always thought her true to him since he'd known her, and Thornton, whatever kind of man he was, wouldn't run away from her arms, would he?

The red glow from the ruby ring had vanished; the man had risen from his seat and was placing something in the box on top of the ring. Madison's mind subconsciously absorbed the fact that it was a little sheaf of yellow-backed bills. And now the man bent to the table and was writing in the book.

Yellow-backs and rubies! Rubies and yellow-backs! Madison's lips thinned and curled downward at the corners. Oh, it was coming, all right; money, jewels, pelf, rolling in merrily every day; there wasn't any stopping it; but he was paying for it, and paying for it at a price he didn't like —Helena. Helena!

She wanted Thornton, did she, with his money? Wanted to dangle a millionaire on her string, eh? She'd throw him over, would she? And she thought she had him where he couldn't lift a finger to stop it—just sit back and grin like a poor, sick fool!

The red crept up the knotted cords of Madison's neck, suffused the set jaws and, as though suddenly liberated to run its course where it would, swept in a tide over cheeks and temples.

He couldn't do a thing—*couldn't he?* Well, he'd see the game in Gehenna before Thornton or any other man got her away from him. She belonged to him—to *him!* And he'd have her, hold her, own her—she was his—*his!* And he'd settle with Thornton, too, by Heaven!

A laugh, low, unpleasant, purled to his lips, and he checked it with a sort of strange mechanical realization that he must not laugh aloud. His eyes swept the room—the man had returned to his seat, the woman had not moved, both were silent, motionless in that ghastly, hallowed, sanctimonious hush.

" For God's sake let me get out of here," Madison muttered, " or I'll go mad."

He turned—and stopped. Came a cry spontaneously from the man and the woman—they were on their feet—no, on their knees. The doorway at the farther end of the room was framing a majestic figure, tall and stately, and a sun gleam struggling suddenly through the lattice seemed to leap in a golden ray to caress in homage the saintly face of the Patriarch.

Into the room he advanced, and his hands were outstretched before him, and he moved them a little to and fro—and the gesture, the poise, the mien, as, touching nothing he seemed to feel his way through space itself, was as one invoking a blessing of peace ineffable.

Spellbound, Madison watched. Upon the face of the old man was a yearning that saddened it, and, saddening, glorified it; the head was slightly turned, as though to listen, while slowly, with measured, certain tread, as though indeed he had no need for eyes, the Patriarch circled the table and passed on down the room. The man and the woman reached out and touched him and drew back reverently to let him pass; then, rising from their knees, followed him through the door and out onto the porch.

The room was empty. Madison stared at the doorway. Upon him fell a sudden awe; it was as though a vision, an ethereal presence, some strange embodiment of

THE DOORWAY FRAMED A MAJESTIC FIGURE

power had been and gone — and yet still remained.

And now from without there came a sound like a distant murmur. It rose and swelled and began to roll in its volume, and then, like the clarion sound of trumpets, voices burst into glad acclaim.

"The Patriarch! The Patriarch! The Patriarch!"

From the little hallway came the Flopper, running, and he stopped and gaped at Madison.

"I left him in his room fer a minute," he gasped. "He's — he's lookin' fer Helena."

And then Madison shook himself together and smiled ironically. And at the smile the Flopper hurried on.

Madison stepped out on the porch. Helena! Within him seemed to burn a rage of hell; but it seemed, too, most strangely that for the moment this rage was held in abeyance, that something temporarily supplanted it—this scene before him.

Onward across the lawn moved the Patriarch, and the Flopper had joined him now; but the Patriarch, unheeding, turning neither to the right nor to the left, his arms still extended before him, kept on. And the people cried aloud:

"He is coming—he is coming! The Patriarch! The Patriarch!"

Madison moved on—out upon the lawn himself.

From everywhere, from every scattered spot where they had lurked, men and women ran and limped and dragged themselves along, all converging to one point—the Patriarch.

Madison, in the midst of them now, hurried, for it was plainly evident that the Flopper's control over the Patriarch was gone. He reached the old man himself and touched his arm, and at the touch the Patriarch halted instantly, his hand went out and lay upon Madison's sleeve in recognition. He turned his face, and it was smiling, and there was relief upon it and confidence and trust as, suffering himself to be guided, they started back toward the cottage.

And then upon Madison came again that sense of awe, but now intensified. From every hand tear-stained faces greeted him, white faces — faces full of sorrow and suffering through which struggled hope. They flung themselves before the Patriarch, yet never blocked the way. They cried, they wept, they prayed—and some were silent.

It seemed that souls, naked, stripped bare, held themselves up to his gaze. Men, prostrate on stretchers, tried to rise and stagger nearer—and fell. Friends, where there were friends to help, tugged and dragged desperately at cots—and from the cots in piteous, agonized appeal the helpless cried out to the Patriarch to come to them. All of human agony and fear and hope and despair and terror seemed loosed in a mad and swirling vortex. And ever the cries arose, and ever around them, giving way, closing in again, pressed the soul-rent throng.

And presently to Madison it seemed as though he had awakened from some terrifying dream as, in the Patriarch's room again, he swept away a bead of sweat from his forehead and stood and looked at the Patriarch and the Flopper.

The latter licked his lips and pulled the Patriarch's chair forward, but his hands trembled violently.

" It's been gettin' me, Doc," he whispered, " an' I can't help it. It's been gettin' into me all de time. Say, I wisht it was over. Honest to God I do! Dis—dis makes me queer. Say, de Patriarch's got me, Doc, an'—an'—say—dere's been somethin' goin' on inside me dat's got me hard."

Madison did not answer, but he started suddenly, and as suddenly stepped to the window and looked out. Over the cries, the wailings, the confused medley of voices, growing lower now, there had come the throb of a motor-car.

Madison's eyes narrowed. The car was coming to a stop before the porch. Thornton was helping Helena to alight.

Madison turned and caught the Flopper's arm in a fierce imperative grasp.

" You keep your mouth shut—do you hear?" he flung out, clipping off his words. " You haven't seen me to-day — understand?" And, dropping the Flopper's arm, he stepped quickly across the little hall to Helena's door, opened it, went in, and closed the door behind him.

And the Flopper, staring, licked his lips again.

" Swipe me!" he croaked hoarsely. " Pipe de eyes on de Doc! Dere'll be somethin' doin' now!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE SANCTUARY OF DARKNESS

THERE was a grim, merciless smile on Madison's lips; and a whiteness in his face windowed the passion that seethed within him. He stood motionless, listening, in Helena's room. He heard the automobile going away again; then he heard Helena's light step in the hallway without, and the smile died as his lips thinned.

But she did not come in—instead, he heard her go into the Patriarch's room, heard her talking to the Patriarch and bidding the Flopper go to the kitchen and make her some tea. Then the Flopper's step sounded, passing down to the rear of the cottage.

The minutes passed; then that light footfall again. The door of the room swung suddenly wide—and closed—there was a cry, and Helena, wide-eyed, the red of her cheeks fading away, leaned heavily back against the door.

Neither spoke. Madison, in the center of the room, did not move. The smile came back to his lips.

Helena's great brown eyes met the gray ones, read the ugly glint, dropped, lifted again, and held the gray ones steadily.

Madison gave a short laugh that was like a curse. His hands at his sides knotted into lumps.

Then he spoke.

" Why don't you say ' you—*you!* ' and scream it out and clutch at your bosom the way they do in story-books?" he flung out raucously. " Why don't you do your little stunt? Go on; you're booked for the turn —you can put anything over me; I'm only a complacent, blind-eyed fool! Anything goes! Why don't you start your act?"

" You don't know what you are saying," she answered in a low voice. " If there's anything you want to talk about, we'd better wait until you're cooler."

" Oh, hell!" he roared, his passion full to the surface now. " Cut out the bunk—cut it out! *Anything!* No, it isn't much of anything—for you—out all night with Thornton. Do you think I'm going to stand for it? Do you think I'm going to sit and suck my thumb and *share* you, and—"

" You lie!" She was away from the door now, close before him, her breath coming fast, white to the lips, and in a frenzy her little fists pummeled him. " It's a lie—a lie—a lie! It's a lie, and you know it!"

He pushed her roughly from him.

" It is, eh?" His words came in a sort of wild laugh. " And I know it, do I? Why should I know it? What do you think you are? Say, you'd think you were trying to kid yourself into believing you're the real thing—the real, sweet, shy, modest

Miss Vail. Cut it out! Your name's Smith—maybe! And it's my money that's keeping you, and you belong to me—do you understand?"

She stood swaying a little, her hands still tightly clenched, breathing through half-parted lips in short, quick, jerky inhalations, like dry sobs.

"It's true," she faltered suddenly, and buried her face in her hands. Then she looked up again, and the brown eyes in their depths held an anger and a shame. "It's true—I was—was—what you say. But now"—her voice hurried on, an eagerness, a strange earnestness in it—"you must believe me—you must. I'll make you—I must make you."

"Oh, don't hurt yourself trying!" jeered Madison. "We're talking plain now. I'm not taking into account how you feel about it—don't you fool yourself for a minute. The sanctity of my home hasn't been ruined—because it couldn't be! Get that? Thornton don't get you—not for *keeps!* But you and he don't make a monkey of me again. Do you understand—say, do you get that? You're *mine,* whether you like it or not, whether you'd rather have Thornton or not. But I'll fix you both for this. I'm no angel with a cherub's smile! I'll take it out of Thornton till the laugh he's got now fades to a fare-thee-well; and I'll put you where there aren't any strings tying me up the way there are here. Do you understand?"

His voice rose suddenly, and for a moment he seemed to lose all control of himself as he reached for her and caught her shoulder.

"I love you," he flashed out between his teeth. "I love you—that's what's the matter with me! And you know that; you know you've got me there; and you'd play the fool with me, would you?" He dropped his hands and laughed a short, savage bark, then stepped back and stared at her.

"Will you listen?" She was twisting her hands, her head was drooped, the long lashes veiled her eyes, her lips were quivering. "Will you listen?" she said again, fighting to steady her voice. "It was an accident."

"I saw the machine when you drove up—it was a wreck!" snapped Madison sarcastically.

"We ran out of gasoline," she said quietly.

And then Madison laughed fiercely in his derision.

"Oh, keep on!" he rasped. "I told you I was only a blind fool that you could put anything over on! That accounts for it, of course—a breakdown isn't so easy to get away with. Gasoline!"

"We were miles from anywhere," she went on. "We had taken what we thought was a short cut. Mr. Thornton built a shelter for me in the woods and went to—to—"

He caught up her hesitation like a flash.

"Fake the lines, Helena, if you haven't had enough rehearsals," he suggested ironically. "Anything goes—with me."

And now a tinge of color came to Helena's cheeks, and the brown eyes lifted and flashed and dropped.

"He went to try to find help," she said. "He was out all night in the storm. I do not know how far he must have walked. I know the nearest house was five or six miles away—and there was no horse there—the man had driven to some town that morning. It was almost daylight before Mr. Thornton at last came back with a team. We were forty miles from here; we sent the team to the nearest town for gasoline and then motored back." She stopped; and then, with a catch in her voice: "He—he was very good to me."

"Good to me!" The words seemed to stab at Madison—seemed to ring in his ears and goad him to a fiercer jealousy; and her story of the night, what she had been saying, save those words, meant nothing—and only she, standing there before him, glorious, maddening in her beauty, remained.

Soul, mind, and body leaped into fiery passion—she was his, and his she always would be—those eyes, those lips, the white throat, those perfect arms to cling about his neck—and all of heaven and hell and earth were naught beside her.

"I love you!" His face was white, his words fierce-breathed, almost incoherent—and he leaned toward her with a sudden, uncontrollable movement, his arms sweeping out to clasp her. "I love you, Helena—I love you! Do you understand?—it's *you.* I love you!"

"You *love* me!" She retreated from him, but her head was raised now, and her voice rang with a bitterness cold as the touch of death. "Love? What do you know of *love?* We talk plain, you say.

ALL OF HUMAN AGONY AND FEAR AND HOPE SEEMED LOOSED IN A MAD AND SWIRLING VORTEX

Love—love for me? Passion, vice, lust, sin—and, oh, my God! degradation and misery and shame—love! Love! That is *your* love!"

He stood for a moment and stared at her again—and her face was as pallid ivory. And something seemed to daze him, and he brushed his hand across his eyes—the logic was faulty, torn, and pitiful, and he groped after the flaw.

"It's—it's your love as well as mine," he said in a stumbling way; then his brain flashed quick into action. "My love—what other love have *you* known but that?" he cried. "It's *our* love—the love we have known together—and we're going back to it—see? I've had enough of this. You pack your trunks—and pack them quick! We're going to beat it out of here! We're going back to our — love. We're going back where I don't have to sit around like a puling fool and watch Thornton chuck you under the chin; we're going where he'll want a tombstone if he ever shows his face there. You thought the game would hold me to the last jack-pot—did you? Well, I've got enough — and there's no game big enough to make me stand for this. That looks like love—doesn't it?" He burst again into a sudden, mirthless laugh—and once again swept his hand across his eyes. "We're going to beat it out of here now—to-night—to-morrow morning."

But now she had drawn farther away from him — and there was a frightened look in her eyes, and her lips quivered pitifully.

"No—I can't—I can't!" she cried out. "No, no — I can't — I can't go back to *that!*"

"That! That—is love!" he said wildly. "The only love you know! What more do you want? There's loot enough now, and—ha, ha!—that little contribution of Thornton's, to give you all the money you want. Love, Helena—you and I—the old love—you and I together again, Helena. I tell you I love you—do you hear? I love you—and I'll have you—I love you! What do you know—what do you care about any other kind of love?"

She looked at him, misery and fear still in her eyes, and her slight figure seemed to droop, and her hands hung heavy, listless, at her sides.

"I care"—the words came in a strange, mechanical way from her lips—"oh, I care! I can't—I won't go back to that! And I know—I know now. I have learned what love is."

Quick over Madison's face surged the red in an unstemmed tide—volcanic within him of love that he knew now possessed his very soul—blinding jealousy that robbed him of his senses.

"Oh, you've learned what love is, have you—*with him?*" he cried, and sprang for her and snatched her into his arms. "And you won't come—eh? Well, I've learned what love is, too, in the last month; and if I can't get it one way I'll get it another!" He was raining mad kisses upon her face, her hair, her eyes. "I love you, I tell you—I love you!"

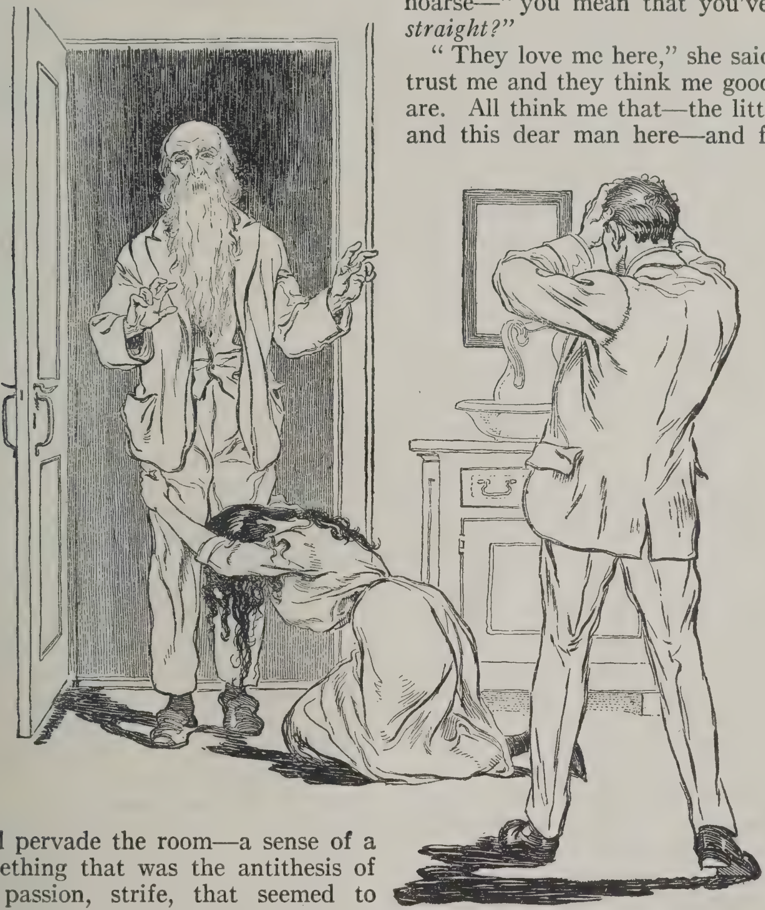
With a cry she tried to struggle from him—and then fought and struck at him, beating upon his face with her fists. Fiercer, closer he held her; around the little room, staggering this way and that, they circled.

He kissed her, laughing hoarsely like a madman at her blows, beside himself, not knowing what he did—mad—mad—mad. He kissed her, kissed the white throat where the dress was now torn at the neck; imprisoned a little fist that struck at him and kissed the quivering knuckles; kissed the wealth of glorious, burnished-copper hair that, loosened, fell about her—kissed it and buried his face in its rare fragrance. And then—and then his arms were empty—and he was staring at the calm, majestic figure of the Patriarch—and Helena was crouched upon the floor, and, sobbing, was clinging with arms entwined around the old man's knees.

And so for a little while Madison stood and stared. What had brought the Patriarch there—the Patriarch who could neither see nor hear nor speak—what had brought him from his own room across the hall? Madison stared, and his hands crept to his temples and pressed upon them—weak he seemed as from some paroxysm of madness that had passed over him.

Strange! Strange! Madison's hands fell to his sides. The Patriarch's eyes were turned full upon him, wavering not so much as by the fraction of an inch. And then, as into some holy sanctuary, fending her from harm and danger, the Patriarch turned a little to interpose himself before Madison, and, raising Helena, held her in his arms, her head against his bosom—and one hand lay upon her hair and stroked it tenderly. But upon Madison were still turned those sightless eyes that noble face, serene, commanding even in its perturbation.

Madison stirred now—stirred uneasily—while the silence held. There was a solemnity in this silence that seemed to creep upon and pervade the room—a sense of a vast something that was the antithesis of turmoil, passion, strife, that seemed to radiate from the saintly figure whose lips were mute, whose ears heard no sound, whose eyes saw no light. And upon Madison it fell potent, masterful, and passion fled; and in its place came a strange, groping response within him, a revulsion, a penitence—and he bowed his head.



HELENA WAS CROUCHED UPON THE FLOOR AND, SOBBING, WAS CLINGING WITH ARMS ENTWINED AROUND THE OLD MAN'S KNEES

And then Helena spoke—but her head was turned away from him, hidden on the Patriarch's breast.

"Once," she said, and her words were like broken whispers, for she was sobbing still—"once, long, long ago, when I was a little girl, I read the story of Mary Magdalen. I had almost forgotten it, it was so long ago; but it has come back to me, and—and it is a glad story—at the end."

She stopped — and Madison raised his head, and his face was strained as with some sudden wonder as he looked at her.

"It is a glad story," she said presently. "It—it is my story."

"You mean" — Madison's voice was hoarse—"you mean that you've turned—*straight?*"

"They love me here," she said. "They trust me and they think me good—as they are. All think me that—the little children and this dear man here—and for a little while, since I have been here, I have lived like that. They made me believe that it was true—*true*. And there was shame and agony—and hope. It seemed they could not all be wrong, and I have asked and prayed that I might make it true always—and—and for forgiveness for what I was."

"You mean," he said again hoarsely, and he stepped toward her now — "you mean that you are—*straight?*"

She did not answer—only now she turned toward him and lifted her head.

And for a long minute Madison gazed into the tear-splashed eyes, deep, brave in chastened wistfulness—gazed; and, like a man stunned, walked from the room, the cottage, and out across the lawn.

CHAPTER XX

TO THE VICTOR ARE THE SPOILS

Many were still about the lawn as Madison left the cottage. They were all around him, those sick, half-frantic creatures—and still they made noises; some of them cried and sobbed; in their waning paroxysms they moved hither and thither. They appealed to some numbed, dormant sense in him, in a subconscious way, as things to be avoided. And so, almost mechanically, he took the little path that, striking off at right angles to the wagon-track where it joined the Patriarch's lawn, came out again upon the main road at the farther end of the village.

And as he walked, like tidal-waves onrushing, emotions, utterly at variance one with another, hurled themselves upon him, and he was swept from his mental balance, tossed here and there, rolled gasping, strangling in the turmoil of the waters, as it were, and, rising, was hurled back again.

White as death itself was Madison's face; and at times his fingers, with a twitching movement, curled into clenched fists; at times his open palms sought his temples in a queer, wriggling way and pressed upon them. Doubt, anger, fear, a rage unhallowed buffeted him until his brain reeled and he was as a man distraught.

It began always with a picture of the Roost that night — the vicious, unkempt, ragged figure of the Flopper—the sickly, thin, greedy visage of Pale Face Harry, the drug fiend, wincing a little as he plunged the needle into his flesh—the easy, unprincipled gaiety and eagerness of Helena for the new path of crime—crime—crime; the Roost exuded crime—filth—immorality—typified them, framed them as they had sat there, the four of them, while that bruised-nosed bouncer had brought them drink on his rattling tin tray. And then there was Madison's own self-satisfied, smug, complacent egotism at his own cleverness, his unbounded confidence in his own ability to pull off the game, and—

Well, he had pulled it off—he'd won it—everybody had fallen for it — the boobs had been plentiful — the harvest rich. What was the matter with him? He'd won—was winning every time the clock ticked. Somebody back there was probably throwing good, hard coin at him this minute—the fool! Madison threw back his head to laugh in derision, for there was mocking laughter in his soul — but the laugh died still-born upon his lips.

It was fear now—fear—staggering, appalling fear. He was facing something that his brain did not seem to define—a something that was cold and stern and immutable, that was omnipotent, that embodied awe—a condemnation unalterable, unchangeable, before which he shrank back with his soul afraid. Before him seemed to unfold itself the wagon-track—the road to the Patriarch's cottage; and he was there again, and whispering lips were around him, and men and women and children were there—and in front of them, leading them, slithered that twisted, misshapen, formless thing.

Madison shivered a little and a sweat bead oozed out and glistened upon his forehead. Hark, what was that? Clarion-like, clear as the chimes of a silver bell, rang now that childish voice, and the crutch was gone and the lame boy ran, ran —*ran!* And who was it that stood before him now—that golden-haired woman beside an empty wheel-chair, whose face was radiant, who cried aloud that she was *cured?* And who were these others of later days? — this motley crowd of old and young, that passed before him in procession, who cried out the same words: "Faith! Faith! Faith!"

Madison swept the sweat from his forehead with a trembling hand. It was a lie —a lie—a lie! He had taught them to say that, but it was all bunk, and they were all fools! He could laugh at them, jeer at them, mock at them, deride them—they were his playthings, and faith was his plaything, and he could laugh at them all!

And again he raised his head to laugh; and again the laugh was choked in his throat, still-born — *Helena was straight!* Anger raged upon him—and died in fear. Anger, for the instant maddening him, that he should lose her; rage, in ungovernable fury, that the game, his plans, the hoard accumulated, was bursting like a bubble before his eyes.

No, no; he had not meant to laugh or mock—no, no; not that! What was this loosed titanic power that had done these things—that had brought this change in Helena; that had brought a change in the Flopper, transforming the miserable, pitiful, whining thief into a man reaching out for decent things; that had wrought at least a physical metamorphosis in Pale Face Harry—that had transfigured those three who, in their ugly, abandoned natures, had hung like vultures on his words in the Roost that night? What was this power that he was trifling with, that brought him now this cold, dead fear before which he quailed? What was this *something* that in his temerity he had dared invoke; that rose now, engulfing him, a puny maggot; that snatched him up and flung him headlong, shackled, before this nebulous, terrifying tribunal, where out of nothingness, out of a void, the calm, majestic features of the Patriarch took form and changed, and kept changing, and grew implacable, set with the stamp of doom?

And so he went on, following the little path that bordered the woods on one hand and the fields on the other; went on until he neared the village, and then he stopped suddenly and turned about. Some one had called his name.

From the field a man climbed over the fence and came toward him. The man's face was tanned and rugged, his form erect, and the sleeves rolled back above the elbows displayed browned and muscular forearms. Madison stared at the man apathetically. This was the farm, of course, where Pale Face Harry boarded, and this was Pale Face Harry, but—

"Doc," said Harry, and he shuffled his feet and looked down—"Doc, I got something I've been wanting to say to you for a week."

Madison still gazed at him apathetically. Pale Face Harry raised his eyes, lowered them, kicked at a clod of earth with the toe of his boot, and raised his eyes again.

"Say," he blurted out, "I'm through, Doc. I'm—I'm going to quit."

Into Madison's stumbling brain leaped but one idea, and he jumped forward, reaching savagely for Pale Face Harry's throat.

"You'd throw me, would you? You'd throw the game, would you?" he snarled, as his fingers locked.

Pale Face Harry, twisting, wriggled free and retreated a step.

"No," he gasped, and then his sentences came tumbling out upon each other jerkily, as though he were trying to compress what he had to say into as few words as possible and as quickly as he could, while he watched Madison warily. "I ain't throwing nothing. I just want to quit myself. I keeps my mouth shut—see? I don't want none of the share what's coming. Say, I've got more'n a hundred times that out of it. Look at me, Doc! Say, I'm like a horse. That's the Patriarch and living honest. Say, in all me life I never knew what it was before till we comes here. If I took the dough what's coming I'd go back to the old hell, and I'd go down and out again. Say, it ain't worth it; there's nothing in it. I ain't throwing you, Doc—I just blows out of here with me trap closed. Say, look at me, Doc—don't you get what I mean?"

At that Madison burst into a peal of wild, strange laughter; and, as though no man stood before him, started on along the path—and Pale Face Harry sidled out of his way and stared after him.

"For—for God's sake, Doc," he called out, stammering, "what's the matter?"

But Madison made no answer. He heard Harry call out behind him; in a subconscious, dazed way, he sensed the other following him, gropingly, hesitantly, for a few yards, then hold back—and finally stop.

The path swerved. Madison went on—blindly, mechanically, as though, once set in motion, he must go on. Some ghastly, unnatural thing was clogging his brain; not only in a mental way, but clogging it until there was physical hurt and pain, an awful tightness—something—if he could only reach it with his fingers and claw it away! There was black madness here, and a pain insufferable—a damnable impotence, robbing him of even the faculty to think or reason, or to make himself understand in any logical degree the meaning of this thing that sent his brain swirling sick.

He halted. His lips were working; the muscles of his face twitched. And suddenly, snatching his hat from his head, he flung himself on the ground and plunged face and head feverishly, tigerishly into the little brook that ran beside the path. Again and again he buried his face in the cold, clear, refreshing water — and then, still on hands and knees, he raised his head to listen. Softly, full of a great peace, a strange sweetness that knew no discord, no strife, the notes of the chapel bell floated across the fields. Evening had come; the day's work was done—it was benediction time. It was the call of the faithful —the angelus of those who believed.

The revulsion came to Madison in a choked sob—and he stood up. The day's work was done—here. Here they would go in quiet thankfulness, each from the farm to his little cottage; each to his simple, wholesome meal; each to the twilight hours of gentle communion as they talked to one another from their doorways; each to his bed and his rest, tranquil in the love of God and of man.

Madison flung back the dripping hair from his forehead. Strange the contrast that, unbidden, came insistently to him now. Here the liquid notes of the bell wafted sweetly on the evening breeze; and there the howling, jangling turmoil of the city slums, of his familiar haunts, where in mad chaos reigned the hawkers' cries, the thunder of the Elevated trains, the jarring traffic of the street, the raucous clang of trolley bells—here the sweet perfume of the fields, the smell of trees, of earth, of all of God's pure things untouched, unsoiled.

And so he stood there for a little space; then, presently, he started forward again; and presently he reached the village street, walked down its length, greeted from every doorway with hearty, unaffected sincerity, and after a little he came to the hotel, and to his room—and there he locked the door.

Helena was straight — the words were repeating themselves over and over in his brain. He began to pace up and down. The words seemed to take form and shape in fiery red letters, being scrawled by invisible hands upon the walls—*Helena was straight*. Straight with Thornton, straight with any man—straight with her Maker. He knew that now—he had read it as a soul-truth in those brave, deep, tear-dimmed eyes. And he had *lost* her! It seemed as though he had become suddenly conscious that he was enduring some agony that was never to know an end, that from now on must be with him always. He had lost her—lost Helena.

From his pocket he drew out his keys, opened his trunks, took out the trays, and spread them about. There were very many trays; they nested one upon the other—and they were exceedingly ingenious trays —false bottoms to every one. And now he opened these false bottoms and stood and looked at them. The surest, safest, biggest game he had ever played, the game that had known no single hitch, the game that had brought no whispering breath of suspicion, flung its tribute in his face. Money that he had never tried to count, notes of all denominations, large and small, glutted the receptacles; jewels in necklaces, in rings, in pendants, in brooches, in bracelets, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, winked at him, glowed, and were afire.

And he stood and looked upon them. What was it the Flopper had said when they had brought the Patriarch back? He did not remember. What was it that Pale Face Harry had said a little while ago? He did not remember. These were jewels here and money—wealth—and he had won the greatest game that was ever played, only he had lost her—lost Helena. And he stood and looked upon them, and slowly there crept to his face a white-lipped smile.

" I'm beat!" he whispered hoarsely. " Beat—by the game—I won."

CHAPTER XXI

FACE VALUE

It was evening of the same day, and there came a knock at the outer door of the cottage porch.

The Flopper answered it, and came back to the Patriarch's room, where the Patriarch sat in his armchair. The lamp, turned low, threw the little room into half shadow. Helena, her chair close beside the other's, nestled with her head on the Patriarch's shoulder.

She looked up as the Flopper entered.

Upon his face was a curious expression. It seemed to mingle a diffidence, solicitude, and a sort of anxious responsibility.

" It's Thornton askin' fer youse," he announced.

Helena rose and started for the door, but the Flopper blocked the way. Helena halted and looked at him in astonishment.

The Flopper licked his lips.

" Say, Helena," he said earnestly, " if I was youse I wouldn't go—say, I'll tell him youse have got de pip an' gone ter bed."

"Not go?" echoed the girl. "What do you mean?"

The Flopper scratched at his chin uneasily.

"Oh, you know!" he said. "De Doc let youse down easy ter-day. Say, if youse had piped his lamps when you drives up in de buzz-wagon dis afternoon youse wouldn't be lookin' fer any more trouble. Say, I'm tellin' youse straight, Helena. When I was out dere in the kitchen an' youse was in yer room wid him me heart was in me mouth all de time. Youse can take it from me, Helena, he let youse down easy."

Helena's brown eyes, a little wistfully, a little softly, held the Flopper.

"Yes?" she said quietly.

"Youse had better cut it out ter-night, Helena," the other went on. "Y'oughter know de Doc by dis time. De guy dat starts anything wid him gets his—dat's all! Remember de night he threw Cleggy down de stairs in de Roost. An' then he was only having fun! Say, you go out wid Thornton again ter-night an' de Doc finds it out — an' something'll happen. Say, Helena, for God's sake, don't youse do it. De Doc was bad enough dis afternoon when he let youse down easy, but he's worse now, an'—"

"Worse?" Helena interrupted, smiling a little apathetically. "In what way is he worse? And how do you know? You haven't seen Doc, have you?"

"No," the Flopper answered, circling his lips with his tongue again. "No; I ain't seen de Doc since, but I seen Pale Face. Say, Helena"—the Flopper's words came stumbling out now, agitated, perturbed, not altogether coherent—"wot's de answer I dunno; I dunno wot's de matter here. Say"—he pointed suddenly to the Patriarch, whose face was turned toward them as he stroked thoughtfully at his silver beard—"he's got me fer fair; dere ain't no fake here; dis way ter live is de real t'ing; he ain't like you an' me—he's *more'n* dat. Look at him now—youse'd t'ink he could see us, an' was listenin' ter wot we said. I dunno wot's de end. I dunno wot's de matter wid me. I was scared more'n ever out dere dis afternoon on de grass, an' I thought mabbe God 'ud strike me dead. But 'tain't only dat I'm scared ter buck de game any more, 'tain't only dat—I don't *wanter* any more, an' it don't make no difference about de dough. I wanter live straight, same as him, same as de guys around here, same—same as Mamie. Say, Helena; say, do youse believe in love—in—in de *real* t'ing?"

Helena's apathy was gone now, a flush dyed her cheeks. She was not startled at what the Flopper had said; she had seen it coming, subconsciously, vaguely, mistily, for days now, only she had been immersed in herself; she was not startled, and yet, in a way, she was. The end! She, too, had been thinking about that, and she, too, did not know. What *was* the end?

"You were going to say something about Pale Face," she prompted the Flopper. "Something about Pale Face and Doc."

"Yes," assented the Flopper, and again the tip of his tongue sought his lips nervously. "Dat's why I don't want youse to go out wid Thornton ter-night. Pale Face has got it de same as me, an' he told de Doc this afternoon, out in de path there, after de Doc left here. Dere was a showdown—see? De Doc 'ud kill youse an' Thornton ter-night if he caught youse tergether. He's like a wild man. When Pale Face tells him he was goin' ter quit de Doc makes a grab fer him by de t'roat like a tiger, only Pale Face gets away, an' den de Doc goes off widout a word, laughin' like he'd escaped out of a dippy-house. An' Pale Face was shakin' like he had a fit when he gets here. Say, Helena, don't youse go ter-night."

Helena made no answer for a moment. Thoughts, a world of them, crowded upon her, as they had ever since Madison had left her room a few hours ago. The future was as some dread, bewildering maze through which she had tried to stumble and grope her way—and had lost herself ever deeper. How full of utter, miserable, bitter irony it was that this thing, unscrupulous and shameful, that they had created in their guilt, should have brought the beauty and the glory and the yearning of a new life to her—and yet should chain her remorselessly to the old!

True, she had broken with Madison—irrevocably, she supposed; it could not be other than that, for the ugly bond between them was severed; but the game still went on! In repentance, on her bended knees, sobbing as a tired and worn-out child, she could ask for forgiveness; but the double life, the duplicity, by reason of the very nature in which they had fashioned this

HELENA'S HEAD WAS NESTLED ON THE PATRIARCH'S SHOULDER

iniquitous monster, still went on and, like some hideous octopus, reached out its waving tentacles to encircle her. The Patriarch there; the world-wide publicity; those poor creatures upon whose misery and whose suffering they had preyed and fed and gorged themselves; the life itself that she had taken up, in its care of this great-souled, great-hearted man so dear to her now—all these still held her fast! The end? She could not see the end.

What would Madison do?—and there was Thornton. Thornton! She caught her breath a little. Yes; she had promised Thornton she would see him to-night. She knew well enough why he wanted to see her—last night had told her that. He loved her. Her face softened. Last night—it seemed a thousand years ago, and yet as if but as an instant past—last night—she had learned what love was, and—

The Flopper stirred uneasily.

"Wot'll I tell him?" he asked. "He's waitin' out dere by de porch."

"Why—why, nothing," said Helena, and she smiled a little tremulously. "Nothing. I'll—I'll go and see him."

"Say, Helena," protested the Flopper, "don't youse—"

But Helena stepped past him.

"Don't leave the Patriarch," she cautioned, turning on the threshold. "I—I won't be late."

She passed down the little hall, through the still, quiet room beyond, empty now, across the porch, and out into the night. Then from out of the shadows by the row of maples Thornton came hurriedly toward her, holding out his hands.

"It's good of you to come, Miss Vail," he said in his grave, quiet way. "You must be nearly dead with weariness after last night, and I am afraid I am not very thoughtful—only I—" He broke off suddenly. "Shall we sit here on the bench for a little while, or would you rather walk? I—I have something to say to you."

It was very dark; the storm of the night before still lingered in a wrack of flying clouds, scurrying one after the other, veiling the stars—and the moon was hidden—and hidden, too, was the sudden whiteness of Helena's face. She knew what he had to say—knew it before she had come to him—and yet she was there—and she had come resolutely enough—only now she was frightened.

"I would rather walk a little, I think," she said. "Here where—where I can be within call. My absence last night seems to have made the Patriarch very uneasy, you know, and—and—let us just walk up and down here beneath the maples in front of the cottage."

How heavy upon the air lay the fragrance of the flowers! How still the night was, save for the constant muffled boom of the breaking surf! For a moment an almost ungovernable impulse swept upon her to make some excuse—anything, no matter how wild—a sudden faintness—and run from him back into the cottage. And then she tried to think—think in a desperate sort of way of some subject of conversation that she might introduce that would stave off the words that she knew were even now on his lips. But she could think of nothing—only that she might have let the Flopper have his way and have him tell Thornton that she had gone to bed with—the pip.

The *pip!* She could have screamed out hysterically as the word flashed all unbidden upon her—it stood for a very great deal, that word—her world of the years of yesterday. Could she never get away from that world? Was it too late—already? Could she, even with all the earnestness, all the yearning that filled her soul, ever live it down, ever be what Naida Thornton had called her that night—a good woman? Could she—

Thornton was speaking now; how strange that she would have done anything, given anything to prevent his speaking—and yet done anything, given anything to make him speak! How strange and perplexed and dismayed her brain was! Love! Yes; she wanted love! Dear God, she wanted love such as his was—for he had shown her what love, free from abasing passion, in its purest sense, was. Like a glimpse of glory, hallowed, full of wondrous amazement, it came to her—and then her head dropped, and the whiteness was upon her face again.

He had halted suddenly and detained her with his hand upon her arm—with that touch, so full of reverence, of fine deference, that had thrilled her before—that thrilled her now, awakening into fuller life these new emotions whose birth was in gladder, sweeter, purer aspirations.

"Miss Vail," he said in a low voice, "there was a letter—a letter that Naida left—did you know of it?"

They were close together, and it was very dark; but was it dark enough to hide the crimson that she felt sweeping in a flood to her face? What was in that letter? Had Mrs. Thornton written as she had talked, or only about the Patriarch and the work in Needley?

She had forgotten for the moment about the letter; if there were more in it than that—if it were about Thornton and herself and what Mrs. Thornton had hoped for between them, and she admitted knowledge of it—what would he think, what *could* he think of her? But to deny it—no, not now. Once, and this came to her in a little thrill of gladness, she would not have hesitated; but now it—it was—it was not that world of yesterday.

"Yes," she said faintly; "she told me that she had left a letter for you."

"It was about the work here," went on Thornton gently. "Her whole soul seemed wrapped up in that—and she asked me as her last wish to do what she would have done if she had lived—and she spoke of you very beautifully."

Thornton paused for a moment; then he laid his hands on Helena's shoulders—and she felt them tremble a little.

"Miss Vail — Helena," he continued, and his voice was full of passionate earnestness now, "I cannot say these things well—only simply. I came back here to take an interest in the work, for I, too, have it at heart; but I have more than that now; there is *you*—your dear self. I love you, Helena; you have come into my life until you are everything and all to me. Helena, look up at me—will you marry me, dear? Tell me what I long to hear. Helena, Helena—I love you!"

But the girl did not answer—only very slowly she raised her head. And his hands on her shoulders tightened, and he was drawing her gently toward him. Then he bent his head until it was close to hers, and his breath was upon her cheek as it had been that other night; and the longing to know that it was hers—a caress, pure in its motive—fascinated her, held her spellbound. Closer his lips came to hers—closer, until they touched hers—and then with a cry she sprang back, and her hands were fiercely pressed against her throbbing temples.

Was she mad? Was it for this that she had forced herself to give him the opportunity to speak to-night, when her motive was so different, when it had seemed the only *right* thing left for her to do?

And now, still holding her temples, she raised her eyes to Thornton. He had stepped back like a man stricken — his hands dropped to his sides.

"I—we—are mad!" she whispered.

"Helena!" he said in a numbed way; and again: "Helena!" Then, with an effort to control his voice: "You—you do not care—you do not love me?"

"No," she said—and thereafter for a long time a silence held between them.

Then Thornton spoke.

"Some day, perhaps, Helena," he said,

"you could learn to love me—for I would teach you. Perhaps now you feel that your whole duty lies here in this work to which you have so unselfishly given your life; but I would not hinder that—only try to help as best I could. Perhaps I have spoken too soon; it is only a few weeks since I saw you first, but it seems as though in those weeks I had come to know you as if I had known you all my life and—"

But now she interrupted him, shaking her head in a sad little fashion.

"You do not know me," she said. "Sometimes I think I do not know myself. Think! You do not know where I came from to join the Patriarch here; you have no single shred of knowledge about me; you do not know a single particular of my life before you met me."

"I do not need to know," he answered gravely. "You are as genuine as pure gold is genuine—it is in your voice, your smile, your eyes. It is a crude simile, perhaps; but one never asks where the pure gold was dug; it stands for itself, for what it is, because it is what it is—pure gold—at its face value."

The words seemed to stab at Helena, condemning, accusing; and yet, too, in a strange, vague way, they seemed to bring her a hope — a promise for the days to come. At face value! If she could live hereafter—at face value?

"Listen," she said, and her voice was very low. "I do not know how to say what I must say to you. Last night I knew that—that you loved me. I had not thought of you in that way until then, or—or I should have tried never to let this hurt come to you. But last night I knew, and since then I have known that sooner or later you would—would tell me of it."

She stopped for an instant — her eyes full of tears now.

"And so," she went on presently, "I have let you speak to-night because it was better, it was even necessary that I should do so at once—because this could not go on—because you must go away and—"

"Necessary?" he repeated. "I—I do not understand."

"No," she said helplessly; "you do not understand — and I — I cannot explain. Oh, I do not know what to say to you—only that you must take what I say as you have taken me—at face value."

"I do not understand," he reiterated. "Are you in trouble? Tell me."

"No," she answered.

"But I cannot go away like this!" he cried out. "I cannot go and leave you, Helena. You have come into my life and filled it; and I cannot let you pass out of it—like this—without an effort to hold what has come to mean everything to me. You may not love me now, but some day—"

She shook her head, interrupting him once more.

"There can never be a 'some day,'" she said. "Oh, I do not want to hurt you—you, to whom I owe more than you will ever know; but—but there can never be anything between us, and—and we are only making it harder for ourselves now—aren't we?"

Then he leaned abruptly toward her.

"Is there—some one else?" he asked in a strained voice.

And to Helena the question came as though it had been an inspiration given him—for after that he would ask no more, seek no more to understand, for he was too big and strong and fine for that; and even if it was hopeless now, this love that she had known for Madison, even if it could never be again, still that love was hers, and she could answer truthfully.

"Yes," she said beneath her breath.

For a moment Thornton neither moved nor spoke. Then he held out his hand.

"Miss Vail," he said simply, "will you tell this 'some one else' that another man besides himself is the better for having known you. Good night. And may God bring you happiness through all your life."

But she did not speak; they were standing by the rustic bench and she sank down upon it and, with her head hidden in one arm outflung across the back of the seat, was sobbing softly.

He stood and watched her for a little space, his face grave and white; then, taking the hand that lay listlessly in her lap, he raised it to his lips—and turned away.

And so he left her—and so, because of this, he knocked upon another door that night and all unwittingly gave to that "some one else" himself the message that he had asked Helena to deliver.

Madison, pacing his room like a caged beast, his teeth working upon the cigar that he had never thought to light, paid no attention to the summons until it had been repeated twice; then, with a glance around the room, his eyes lingering for a critical instant upon the trunks, closed now, the trays restored to their hiding-places, he stepped to the door, unlocked it, and flung it open.

At sight of Thornton, mechanically, as second nature to him, there came a smile upon his working lips, a suave, unconcerned composure to his face; while inwardly, in his dazed, fogged brain where chaos raged, surged an impulse to fling himself upon the other, wreak a mad vengeance upon him. Then swift upon the heels of this an impulse to refrain; for if Helena was straight, why should he harm Thornton? And then the shuttle again—why should he not? Hadn't Helena said that she had learned what love was last night?—and last night she had been with Thornton.

How his brain whirled! What had brought Thornton here, anyhow? If he stayed very long perhaps he would batter the man to jelly, after all. Quick, almost instantaneous in their sequence, came this wild jumble, singing dizzily its crazy refrain through his mind. Then to his amazement he heard some one speaking pleasantly—and to his amazement it was himself.

"Come in, Thornton. Come in—and take a chair."

"Thanks," Thornton answered, and, entering the room, closed the door behind him. "No; I won't sit down. I'll only stop a moment."

The lamp was on the wash-stand, and, intuitively again, Madison shifted his position to bring his own face into shadow—and leaned against the foot of the bed. He stared at Thornton, nodding. Thornton's face was white and exceedingly haggard—rather curious for Thornton to look that way!

"Madison," said Thornton abruptly, "I believe you to be a gentleman in the best sense of the word; and because of that, and because of the unusual circumstances that first brought us together and the mutual interests that have since been ours, I have come to you to-night to tell you, first, that I am going away from Needley and that I shall not return—and then to ask a service and repose a trust in you. You have said several times that you intended to remain here and take a personal and active part in the work?"

Madison removed the chewed cigar-end from one corner of his mouth—and placed it in the other.

"Yes," said Madison.

"Then this is what I want to say," went on Thornton. "For my own sake, because it was my wife's wish, and for other reasons as well, my interest here, though I am going away, will be just as great as it has ever been; and so I want you to keep me thoroughly posted, and when the time comes that I can be of further material assistance, let me know. I impose only one condition—you are to say nothing to Miss Vail about it—you can make anything that I may do appear as if it came from yourself."

"Say nothing to Miss Vail!" repeated Madison vaguely; then a sort of ironic jest seemed to take possession of him: "But Miss Vail keeps all the funds."

"That is why I am asking you to represent me," said Thornton quietly. "I am afraid that she might have a natural diffidence about accepting anything more from me—I asked Miss Vail to marry me to-night and she refused."

The cigar slid down unnoticed from the corner of Madison's mouth—and he leaned forward, clinging with a hand behind him to the bedpost, and stared at Thornton.

"You—*what?*" he gasped.

"Yes; I know," Thornton answered, and moved abruptly toward the door. "Love makes one's temerity very great—doesn't it? I asked her to marry me—because I loved her." He came back from the door and held out his hand. "I've told you what I would tell no other man, Madison. You understand now why—and you'll do this for me?"

What answer Madison made he never knew himself; he only knew that he was staring at the door after Thornton had gone out, and that he wanted to laugh crazily. Marry Helena! Thornton had asked Helena to marry him because he loved her. God, there was humor here! His brain itself seemed to cackle at it—*marry* Helena!

And then suddenly there seemed no humor at all—only black, infamous shame and condemnation — and he straightened up from where he leaned against the bedpost, his face set and strained.

"Thornton had asked Helena to marry him because he *loved* her" — the words came slowly, haltingly, aloud—and then he covered his face with his hands. But he—he who loved her, too—what had *he* done?

CHAPTER XXII

THE SHRINE

For a little time Madison stood there in his room, motionless, staring unseeingly before him; and then, as one awakening from a dream that had brought dismay and a torment too realistic to be thrown off on the instant, his brain still a little blunted, he took up his hat mechanically, left the room, descended by the back stairs to the rear door of the hotel, and took the road to the Patriarch's cottage.

And as he walked in the freshness of the night, the restless turmoil of his soul, that since early afternoon had brought him near to the verge of madness, passed from him utterly, and a strange calm, a strange joy was upon him—and his brain for the first time in many hours was rational, keen—and he was master of himself again—and yet master of himself no more!

He smiled a little at the seeming paradox — smiled a little wistfully. He was beaten by the game he had won. How strange it was, that sense of more than resignation now—a sense that bade him fling wide his arms as though suddenly they had been loosed from bondage and he was free—free as the God-given air around him.

He could understand Helena and the Flopper and Pale Face Harry now. With them it had come slowly—a progression, as it were, that had worked upon them, molding them, changing them day by day—and he had been too blind to see, or, seeing, had measured the changes only by a standard as false as all his life had been false. With him it had come in a crash, unheralded, that had left him a naked, quivering, stricken thing.

On Madison walked — along the road, across the little bridge, into the wagon-track where, under the arched branches, it was quite dark. There was no one upon the road; he was alone.

He had lost Helena; but he understood her now—understood the depth of remorse that she was living through, the terror and the dread as she sought escape; the fear of him—yes, it would be fear now where once it had been love! He had lost Helena—that was the price he had paid—but he understood her now, and he was going to her to help her if he could, going to tell her that he, too, was changed—as she was changed.

His hands clenched suddenly. God, the misery, the hopelessness, the wreck and ruin that lay at his door! And amends? What amends could he make? It was too late for that! How clearly he saw now—when it was too late! Her life was a broken thing, robbed, stripped, and despoiled for all the years to come. Their love had not been love; she had given it its name—"passion, vice, lust, sin, degradation, and shame." And then love had come to her, into her life—love as God had meant love to be—and she had learned what love was, she had said—only that she might never know its fulness, only that it might bring her added bitterness and added sorrow!

Thornton had asked her to marry him that night, and she had refused him, because the past, as a shuddering, hideous fantom, had risen before her—had left her no other thing to do but turn away. It seemed he could see her—see her bury her face in her hands and—

He stopped short in his walk. Was he changed so much as this? Did he care so much that it was her happiness—even with another—that counted most? Yes, it was true; he was changed, indeed. And the change had brought him, too, it seemed, to learn what love was—too late.

He went forward again—a little more slowly now; a sadness upon him, but through the sadness an uplift from that new sense of freedom that was as a balm, soothing him in the most curious way. His had been a rude awakening — mind and body and soul had been torn asunder; but he knew now, as he recalled the hours just past, when he had looked on fear, when the gamut of human passion had raged over him, that he had come forth a new man. And how strange had been the ending, how strange and simple, and yet how significant, typifying the broad, clean outlook on life embodied in those words of Thornton's—"because he loved her"!

He had reached the end of the wagon-track now, and he walked across the lawn, his steps noiseless on the sward, and passed between the maples; and the moon-gleam—for the flying clouds, rear-guard of the routed storm, were flung wide apart—fell upon a coiled and huddled little figure all in white, quite still and motionless upon the rustic seat beside the porch.

She did not see him, did not hear him, until he stood before her and called her name.

"Helena!" he said unsteadily. "Helena!"

She raised her head and looked at him; then she rose from the bench and, still holding to it by one hand, drew back a little. There was no outcry, no startled action. Her dark eyes played questioningly upon him—and he could see that they were wet with tears, and that the face from out of which they looked was very white.

"Why have you come back here to-night?" she asked in a low tone; and then, suddenly, there was a terror in her voice as the Flopper's warning flashed upon her.

"Thornton—you have seen Thornton?"

"Yes," he said, surprised a little that she should know. "I saw Thornton a few minutes ago."

She came toward him now and clutched his arm.

"What have you done?" she cried tensely. "Answer me! You—you met him on your way here?"

It was a moment before Madison replied. He had schooled himself, of course, for more than this, yet the words hurt—that was why she had asked for Thornton—she was afraid that he had harmed the man.

"No," he said; "I did not meet him. I think you must have been longer here on that bench than you imagined — haven't you? He came to my room."

"Your room! What for? Tell me!"

Madison smiled with grave whimsicality.

"To call me a gentleman and repose a trust."

She stepped back again uncertainly.

"I do not know what you are talking about," she said in a strained way. "And you are speaking very strangely."

"Yes," he said. "Everything is strange to-night. It is like a new world, and—and I have not found my way—yet."

She drew back still farther.

"Are you mad?" she whispered.

"No," he answered. "Not now—that is past."

She looked at him for a little time; and, her hands joined before her, her fingers locked and interlocked nervously.

"And—Thornton?" she asked at last.

"It was a trust," said Madison slowly; "but it was betrayed before it was given. He did not know—the game. He did not know what was between—you and me."

"No," she said, and the word came almost inaudibly.

"And so," Madison went on, "I will tell you; for it cannot matter now, in any case. He told me that he had asked you to marry him to-night—and that you had refused."

Madison paused and swept his hand across his forehead; his voice, somehow, had suddenly grown hoarse beyond control.

"Yes," she said, and reached again for the back of the bench.

"He is going away," Madison continued; "and he is to send more money here for the 'cause'—when I ask for it—only you are not to know, because you might be diffident about taking it after refusing him."

She stared at him numbly; there was no sarcasm in his voice, only a sort of dreary monotony. She shivered a little—how cold it seemed! She did not quite grasp his words—and yet she shrank from them. And then her very soul seemed to cry out against them, to pit itself against their meaning as it surged upon her. And unconsciously she drew herself up, and the whiteness of her face fled before a rush of color.

"Oh, the shame of it!" she burst out. "The bitter shame of it! You shall not touch the money — do you hear? You shall not touch it! I—I thought that you had understood this afternoon. I am glad, then, that you have come to-night—if I must say more to make you understand. This is the end! I do not care what happens—the little I can do now to atone for what I have done I am going to do. The game is over; you shall not touch another cent; and everything that we have taken goes back to those whom we have worse than robbed. You hear—you understand? I will cry it out in the street if there is no other way; but it shall stop—it must stop to-night!" She was panting, breathless, the little figure erect, quivering; and then, suddenly, the shoulders seemed to droop, the lips to tremble, and she was on her knees upon the grass beside the bench and sobbing like a child.

"Helena!" Madison said hoarsely. "Helena! Listen! That is what I came for to-night—to find a way out for you, for us all, if I can."

Instantly she was on her feet again, facing him.

"You are clever—clever!" she cried fiercely. "But you shall not play with me—you shall not trick me. I meant every word I said!"

But now Madison made no answer. The moonlight bathed them both in its clear, white radiance, and touched the sward, shading it to softest green; and the trees stood limned out like fairy things against the night. And upon Madison's face crept slowly the anguish that was in his soul until it was mirrored there, and unconsciously answered her where words would have been useless things. Like some white-robed, sorrowing angel she seemed as she stood there before him, the brown eyes full of shadow, the sweet face tear-splashed, the little figure in its simple muslin frock pitiful in its brave defiance.

And pure — dear God! how pure she looked—the brow stainless white under the mass of dark, coiled hair; the perfect throat of ivory. And — and the misery that was in every feature of her face, in every line of her poise — and he had brought her to that—and now, when he loved her, as he might have loved her once and known her love in return, when his heart cried out for her, when she was all in life he cared for, she was gone from him, and between them was a barrier he could never pass — a barrier of his own raising!

And so he made no answer; but she was coming toward him now, her hands outstretched in a wondering way, wistfully, pleadingly, as though to hold back a refutation that would change the dawning light upon her face to dismay and grief again.

"It—it is true," she faltered. "It has come to you, too, this change, this new life that has come to me? It *is* true. I can see it in your face."

"Yes; it is true," he answered softly.

"Thank God!" she whispered, and hid her face in her hands, and presently he heard her sob again.

A tiny cloud edged the moon, and the light faded, and it grew dark, and the darkness hid her; then softly, timidly almost it seemed, the radiance came creeping through the branches overhead once more—and then he spoke.

"Helena," he said, steadying his voice with an effort, "you spoke of atonement a little while ago; but there is no atonement that I can make to you—nothing that I can do to change what I would give my soul to change. I know what it meant to you to send Thornton away to-night, for I love you now as you love him. I know why you did it, and—"

She was staring at him a little wildly, her hands pressed against her cheeks.

"Love—Thornton?" she repeated in a sort of wondering way, a long pause between the words.

"Yes," he said gently; "I know. Have you forgotten what you told me this afternoon? That you had learned, last night, what love was."

She shook her head.

"I do not love Thornton," she said in a monotone. "And yet it is true that through him I learned what love was, what it *could* be—don't you understand?"

Understand? No; it seemed that he could never understand! She did not love Thornton! And then, as some fiery cordial, the words seemed to whip through his veins, quickening the beat of his heart into wild, tumultuous throbbing. Yes, yes; he could understand; it was true—true—she did not love Thornton.

"Helena!" he cried, and stretched out his arms to her. "I thought — oh, God, I thought that I had lost you—Helena!"

But she did not move.

"What does it matter to you whether I love Thornton or not?" she said dully. "Does it change anything where you and I are concerned?—does it change what I told you this afternoon—that I would not go back to *that?*"

"To that? Ah, no!" His voice rang dominant, vibrant, triumphant now. "Helena, don't you understand? We are to begin life again—in a new way, the true way, the only way. Don't you see—I love you?"

Still she did not move; but there was a great whiteness in her face, and in the whiteness a great light.

"You mean—" Her lips scarcely seemed to form the words.

"Yes!" he cried. "Yes; to make a home for you—to marry you, if only you love me still—to live in God's own sight and hold you as a sacred gift—Helena! Helena!" His arms went out to her again and the yearning in his soul was in his voice. “Helena! Speak to me! Tell me that it is not too late—tell me that you love me, too!”

And then her eyes were raised to his, and they were wet—but there was love-light and a wondrous happiness shining through the tears.

“Helena!” he murmured brokenly—and swept her into his arms—and kissed the eyelids, lowered now, the hair, the white brow, the lips—kissed her and held her there, her clinging arms about his neck, her face half hidden on his shoulder.

And so for a space they stood — and there were no words to say, only the song in their hearts in deathless melody; but after a little time he held her from him and lifted up her face that he might look his fill upon it.

“Helena,” he said, “I cannot understand it all yet; it is as though it were born out of the sin and the darkness and the blackness of what is gone—as though here at this shrine that we created in mockery and crime it was meant that you and I should save each other for each other. And yet this shrine as we have made it is a thing of guilt; and it has brought us all—you and I and Harry and the Flopper—to a new life.”

She lay still for a moment in his arms; then her hand crept up and smoothed back his hair.

“I do not quite know how to put it,” she said a little timidly. “When you went away this afternoon the Patriarch took me back into his room and—and I knelt at his knees—and after a little while my mind seemed very calm and quiet—do you know what I mean? And I tried to think things out—and understand. And it seemed to come to me that there was a shrine everywhere, if we would only look for it—that God has put a shrine in every heart, only we are so blind—that every one can make his own surroundings beautiful and good and true, no matter where he is, or how poor or how rich. And if people live like that they must be good and true themselves.”

“Yes,” he said slowly; then, after a moment: “And faith, too, is very much like that.”

“Only some need a sign,” she reminded him.

There was silence again, while her hand crept over his face and back to his forehead to smooth his hair once more—and then very gently she slipped out of his arms.

“What are we to do about—about everything here?” she asked soberly. “We are forgetting that in our own happiness. How are we going to return the money that we have taken?”

“I don’t know yet,” he answered. “I haven’t thought much about it—but we’ll manage somehow.”

She shook her head.

“I’ve thought a great deal about it since yesterday, I’m not so sure it is to be ‘managed somehow’; and the more I’ve thought the more tangled and complicated it has become.”

“Well, we’ll untangle it to-morrow,” said Madison, with a smile, “and—”

“No.” She touched his sleeve. “To-night. Let us do it now — to-night. I should be so happy then.”

He smiled at her again and drew her to him.

“But we ought to have Pale Face and the Flopper, too—don’t you think so?” he suggested.

“Of course,” she said; “and so we will. The Flopper is here, and we can send him for Harry. It’s early yet—not ten.”

“All right, if you wish it. We’ll go in then and get the Flopper.”

And so they walked to the cottage and on to the porch—and here Madison held her for a moment, and lifted up her face again and looked into her eyes.

“My—wife,” he whispered — and took her in his arms.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE WAY OUT

Strange scene, indeed! Extraordinary antithesis to that other night when these four were gathered in that crime-reeking, sordid room at the Roost — where Pale Face Harry, gaunt, emaciated, coughed and plunged the morphin needle in his arm; where the Flopper, a wretched tatterdemalion from the gutter, licked greedy lips and gloated in his rascality; where Helena, flushed of face, inhaled her interminable cigarettes and dangled her legs from the table-edge; where Madison, suave, flippant, so certain of his own infallibility, glorying in his crooked masterpiece, laid the tribute to genius at his own feet!

Here it was very still—only the distant, muffled boom of the pounding surf. And the shrine-room, for the first time since its creation, was locked against the night. It lay now in shadow from the single lamp upon the table which had a little green-paper shade.

Where he had been wont to sit in the days gone by, the Patriarch sat now in his armchair by the empty fireplace—in the shadow—his head turned in his strange, listening, attentive way toward the table and the four who were grouped around it. There had been no one to stay with him in his own room, and so Helena had brought him here—to play his silent part.

At the table Pale Face Harry, bronzed and rugged, clear-eyed, a robust figure from his clean living, traced the grain of the wood mechanically with his finger-nail, his face sober and perplexed; while the Flopper, clear-eyed, too, his face almost a handsome one in its bright alertness, now that it had rounded out and the hard, premature lines were gone, mirrored Harry's perturbed expression, his eyes fixed anxiously on Madison, opposite him; and Helena, sitting beside Madison, was very quiet, her forehead wrinkled and pursed up into little furrows, the brown eyes with a hint of dismay and consternation lurking in their depths. One hand was stretched out to lie quite unconsciously on Madison's sleeve—and from the sleeve to steal occasionally into Madison's hand.

Madison, his lips tight, pushed back his chair suddenly — they had been sitting there an hour.

"You were right, Helena," he said with a nervous laugh. "The more you try to figure it out the worse it gets."

"Aw, say, Doc," pleaded the Flopper desperately, "don't youse give it up—youse have got de head—youse ain't never left us in a hole yet."

Madison looked at him and smiled mirthlessly.

"My head!" he exclaimed bitterly. "I got you into this—all of you—but it will take more than my head to get you out. If I could stand for it myself, I'd do it—but I can't without dragging you in, too—we're all too closely mixed up. If I said it was a deal of mine, they'd ask where Helena came from—they'd ask where you came from, Flopper. We're beaten—beaten every way we turn. The game has got us—we haven't a move. We played it to the limit, the slickest swindle that was ever worked, and it worked till there's more money than I've tried to count. And then it changed us from thieves, from—from anything you like; and now that we want to quit—now that we want a chance to make good—it's got us in its grip and we can't get away."

He flirted a bead of moisture from his forehead.

"My God, I don't know what to do!" he muttered hoarsely. "It was easy enough to *talk* about stopping this thing—about returning the money—but I can't see the way out."

No one answered him; all were silent—as silent as the mute and venerable figure that sat, listening attentively, it seemed, in the armchair by the fireplace.

Madison turned abruptly after a moment to Pale Face Harry.

"You, Harry," he said, laying a hand on the other's shoulder—"you're the only one of the four that can walk out of it—you don't show in the center of the stage—you go. You said the old folks would cry over you; twenty years is a long time to stay away from the old folks; I—I never knew mine. You go on back to the little farm out there in the West where you said you'd like to go and—and give the old people a hand for the years they've got left."

Pale Face Harry shook his head.

"God knows I'd like to," he said, choking a little; "that's what I counted on. God knows I'd like to go out there and lead a decent life; but I don't go that way; I don't crawl out and leave you; what's coming to you is coming to me."

"That won't help us any, Harry," said Madison softly, and his hand tightened in an eloquent pressure on Pale Face Harry's shoulder. "You go—and God bless you!"

But again the other shook his head.

"No," he said. "I stick. If the game's got you, it's got me, too—to the limit. There's no use talking about that."

The Flopper licked his lips miserably.

"Swipe me!" he mumbled. "Hell wasn't never like dis! Me an' Mamie we've got it fixed, an' her old man says he'll take me inter de store. Say, Doc—say—ain't dere a chanst ter live straight, now we wants ter?"

But Madison did not hear the Flopper save in a vague, inconsequential way—he was looking at Helena. She had drooped forward a little over the table, her chin in her hands, her lips quivering—and a white misery in her face seemed to bring a chill, a numbness to his heart. His hands clenched, and he began to pace up and down the room.

How buoyantly he had tackled the problem — buoyant in his own emancipation, buoyant in his love, full of inspiration, full of the new life that Helena and he would live together! How confidently he had settled himself to undo in a moment the work of months, to outline a mere matter of detail, with never a thought that he was face to face with a problem that he could never solve—that brought him to the realization that the game, not he, was the master still, iron-handed, implacable!

He had done his work well! In the first few moments, an hour ago, when he had begun to consider the problem, as seeming difficulties arose, he had turned coolly from one alternative to another. And then slowly a sickening sense of the truth had begun to dawn upon him; and like a man lost in a great forest, peril around him, he had plunged desperately in this direction and in that as a glimmering point of light here or there had seemed to promise an avenue of escape—only to find it vanish at almost the first step, the way closed as by some invisible, remorseless power. No, not invisible; it seemed to take the form of the Patriarch; for at every turn the majestic figure stood and would not let him pass.

"WE'RE BEATEN—BEATEN EVERY WAY WE TURN"

Madison's face was gray now as he walked up and down the room—there was his own revulsion, his abhorrence at the part he had played, a frantic, honorable eagerness to be rid of it; there were these others, too, who looked to him, the Flopper and Pale Face Harry; and there was—Helena. Helena! He did not dare to look at the misery in her face again—he was unmanned enough now.

And then Helena spoke.

"It—it seems," she said in a low, broken way, "as if—as if God did not want to pardon us—as if our repentance had come too late, and that there was no eleventh hour for us." Then, in passionate pleading, facing Madison: "God cannot mean that; it is we who cannot see. There is some way out—there must be—there *must* be."

"It begins and ends with the Patriarch," said Madison monotonously. "We can't sacrifice him—can we? What's the use of going over it again? It all comes back to the same point—the Patriarch."

"Yes, yes; I know, I know," she said piteously. "But think, Doc—*think!* See, now—we just send back all the money and jewels; we know to whom they belong."

"Well, what reason do we give?" Madison said heavily. "The Patriarch is alive and well. The immediate corollary is that from the moment we do that, to-morrow morning, for instance, every gift, every offering here, is suddenly refused. What reason do we give? If it were only the donors who were to be considered, it might be done. It's human nature that ninety-nine out of every hundred of them"—his voice rose a little bitterly—"would probably be only too glad to get their money back—and the mere statement that you, as the Patriarch's grandniece, his only relative, on mature thought did not consider the project as planned advisable, might suffice. But this thing goes beyond that—beyond even the remaining few who are earnestly interested and would cause us trouble; it is known the world over.

"Every newspaper in the land would snatch at it for a head-line and ask—why? And they would not be content with simply asking why; this thing is too big for that—too much before the people's eyes—too good 'copy.' They'd start in to find out—and the result is inevitable. Our safety so far has lain in the fact that there has been no suspicion aroused; but snooping around a bank vault at midnight with a mask on and a bull's-eye lantern fades to a whisper as a suspicion-arouser compared with anybody willingly coughing up a bunch of money once they've got their claws on it, and a yellow journal, let alone an army corps of them, on the scent of a possible sensation has all the detective bureaus in the country pinned to the ropes; they'd have us uncovered quicker than I like to think about it, and that means—"

He stopped and with a hurried motion carried his hands across his eyes—Helena, pure as one of God's own angels now, to come to that, to come to—

It was the Flopper who completed the sentence.

"Ten spaces up de river," said the Flopper, and shivered, and his tongue sought his lips; "or mabbe—mabbe twenty."

Pale Face Harry stirred uneasily.

"There's the other way," he said without looking up, his eyes on his finger-nail that traced the grain of the wood again. "Get the money and the sparklers all done up and addressed to the ones they came from, send 'em off in a bunch to Thornton; and we fly the coop before he gets them, disappear, fade away, and take our chances of getting caught."

"An' den it's all off wid me an' Mamie." The Flopper's face grew hard. "Nix on dat! Dat don't go!"

"We cannot do that, Harry," said Helena in a tired voice. "There is—the Patriarch."

"Yes," and Madison began his stride up and down the room again. "After all, whether we could give back the money without being caught, or whether we couldn't, is not the vital thing; there is—the Patriarch."

Helena's eyes were on the silent figure in the shadows by the fireplace.

"If—if it were not for him," she said, "I think that perhaps—perhaps I might be brave enough to confess it all, and—and not try to escape from the punishment I deserve. But he would know—he cannot see, nor hear, nor speak, but he would know—as he seems so strangely, so wonderfully, so supernaturally to know and understand everything. And, oh! he means so much to me, to us all, for it is he, more than any one else, who has saved us from—from what we were. And he loves us. It would shatter his faith, ruin all that his life has meant to him, and—and we cannot bring him grief and sorrow like that. Oh, what can we do! What *can* we do!

"We cannot stop — and we cannot go on! We cannot stay here, even if we returned the money successfully, and we cannot stay here if we keep it as it is; for things would still have to go on as they are, even if we didn't mean to steal any more, no matter what we might say or do, for it's beyond our control now, and to stay means that we should still have to lead our double lives, still have to practise hypocrisy and deceit, and—and I cannot—we cannot do that any more. And the only way to get away from it all is to run away—and we can't do that, either! There is—the Patriarch. We cannot leave him —to break his heart—with none he loves to care for him. We can't do that. He is a very old, old man, and—and I think he has been happy with us, and — and we must make him happy always as long as he lives. We cannot go away and leave him. We can't do that." Then, in a heartbroken, despairing cry: "Dear God, we can't do—*anything!*"

No one answered her. She had begged Madison to go over it all again—and she had summed it up herself. And there was always the same outcome—the Patriarch.

There was utter silence in the room now, save only for that low, solemn boom of distant surf, for Madison had stopped his nervous pacing up and down and stood by the Patriarch's armchair gazing into the fireplace.

The minutes passed, and the silence in that dim, shadowed place grew tense—and tenser still. No sound, no movement, utter stillness—only, from without, the moaning of the surf, like a dirge now.

Then, with a sudden sob, Helena flung out her arms across the table toward the Patriarch.

"Oh, if he could only speak!" she cried pitifully. "If he could only speak—he would show us the way out."

The words seem to come to Madison as an added pang. He turned his eyes instinctively from the fireplace to the Patriarch beside him, and then for a moment, as a man stricken, he stood there; and then reaching quickly for the lamp from the table, he held it up and leaned forward toward the figure in the chair.

Helena, startled at the act, rose almost unconsciously to her feet, her hands holding tightly to the table-edge.

"What is it?" she asked tensely.

Madison's lips moved silently. His face was ashen. Then his lips moved once more.

"The way out," he said; and again, in a low, awed way: "*The way out.* We can make restitution now—we can give all back—he *has* shown us the way."

Helena's lips were quivering; tears were dimming the brown eyes, trembling on the lashes, as she stepped to Madison's side.

"It is God who has shown us the way out," she whispered brokenly, and dropping down before the chair, her little form shaken with sobs, she hid her face on the Patriarch's knees.

And serene and peaceful as a child in sleep, a smile like a benediction on the saintly face, the Patriarch sat in his armchair by the fireplace where he had been wont to sit in years gone by—and so he had passed on.

The Patriarch was dead.

CHAPTER XXIV

VALE!

The years have passed, but in their passing have brought few changes to the little village nestling in the Maine pines that border on the sea. Not many changes; it is as though time had touched it, loath to touch at all; as though some spirit lingering there, sweet and fresh and vernal, had bade time stay its hand.

Not many changes—the same familiar faces gather around the stove in the hotel office; and neither as a memory, nor yet as of one who had gone, but as if he were among them, living still, they speak of the Patriarch as of yore.

And with this little circle of kindly, simple folk time has dealt gently, too; for there is only one who is no more—Cale Rodgers, the proprietor of the general store.

But the general store on the village street still flourishes, and in Cale Rodgers's place is one whose speech is still a marvelous thing in staid old New England ears—an Irish brogue, perhaps, for his name is Michael Coogan. There are little Coogans, too, and Mamie is a happy wife. And to the Coogans come sometimes letters from a far Western farm to say that things are well, and that prosperity has come to one who signs himself — facetiously it always seems to Mamie, who reads the letters to her husband—as "Pale Face Harry."

And so the years have passed, and it is summer-time again. The fields are green—the trees in leaf — the flowers in bloom. And there are visitors who have come again to the scenes of yesterday — a man and woman—and between them a sturdy little lad of eight. They stop at the end of the wagon-track and look out across the lawn.

It is still and peaceful, tranquil—and to them comes the soft, low murmur of the surf. Slowly they walk across the lawn and pass beneath the splendid maples—and pause again.

The cottage is like some poet's fancy,

hidden shyly in its creepers and its vines, and seems to speak and breathe in its simple beauty of the gentle soul who once had lived there—and loved his fellow men.

But they do not enter now, for Madison points to where the sunlight, as it glints through the trees at the far end of the cottage, falls on a slender shaft of marble.

"Let us go there, Helena," he says softly.

And so they walk that way, past the trellises laden with flowers, past the end of the cottage; and presently they stop again where, beneath the maples' shade, rises the pure white stone—and beyond it is the sweep of the eternal sea.

Madison, his hair a little gray at the temples, removes his hat — and his face softens as he reads the simple inscription:

The Patriarch

The boy glances at his father a little wonderingly — and then spells out the words. He shakes his head.

"I don't know what that means," he says. "What does that word mean?"

Madison pats his head.

"You tell him, Helena."

And so Helena tells the boy in simple language as much of the Patriarch's story as she thinks he can understand, and when she finishes the boy's face is aglow.

"Gee!" he cries breathlessly. "And—and did he ever do a really, truly-truly miracle?"

There is silence for an instant; then a tender smile comes trembling to Helena's lips, and into the brown eyes creeps the love-light as she reaches out to Madison and her hand steals into his and holds it tightly.

And Madison bends and kisses her, and draws the little lad between them. Then he lays his hand on the boy's head and answers for her:

"Yes, my son; and some day when you are a man you will understand how great a miracle it was."

THE END

NEXT MONTH'S NOVEL—the March novel (full book-length) will be by

LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

When Vance wrote "The Brass Bowl," he drew aside the curtain of night and turned the flash-light of his story-telling power into a woman's heart.

When the reading public opened "The Black Bag," they saw in its depths the source of cupidity.

Those who took the lid off "The Bandbox" found the story of vanity, love of finery, hunger for jewels, and the intrigues born of deceit. It was a best seller.

In his "Destroying Angel" he fashioned a woman whose lips seemed a pool of poison and whose shapely arms were as slaying simitars, whose favor meant failure, and whose kiss was the caress of death. Vance plays upon the keyboard of human emotions with a master hand. His next novel is called

THE LONE WOLF

It will appear complete in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE for March. The hero, Michael Lanyard, was a jackal reared in the brooding shadows through which slips the mysterious Seine.

The story opens with Lanyard as a boy, a cub taught by pain and experience that the stroking of kindly hands was as naught compared with the fang of a single foe. And so this creature of the shadows, in the beginning driven by hunger, though in the end stimulated by pride in his art, prowled from the slums of Paris into the very halls of the mighty.

At the zenith of his fame something settled upon THE LONE WOLF'S heart. The wild look of hatred went out of his eyes, the snarl bred of pain died in his throat. In this story Louis Joseph Vance discloses a new angle of his powers. It is the love story in the life of THE LONE WOLF that makes it human.

"I AM AFRAID YOU HAVE TOO ELABORATE AN OPINION OF MY JEWEL COLLECTION," SHE LAUGHED

Drawn by C. D. Williams

[See short story, "The Emerald Brooch"]

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

Vol. LI March, 1914 Number II

THE GIANT HOTELS OF NEW YORK

AND WHAT THEY MEAN IN OUR MODERN LIFE

BY FRANK A. MUNSEY

THERE have been inns and public houses throughout the centuries. They were the protoplasm from which the modern hotel has been evolved. The hotel of to-day is as unlike the inn of the past as the Twentieth Century Limited is unlike the stage-coach of a century ago. Indeed, the difference is greater rather than less.

The inn or tavern was a shelter for the wayfarer. Its most appealing feature was "mine host," and he differed as much from the proprietor or manager of the modern hotel as his hotel differed from its successor

A TYPICAL HOTEL KITCHEN IN ACTION—A SCENE IN THE McALPIN of to-day. His good-fellowship, his geniality, his bibulous capacity, his unique pomposity and self-complacency made him a real asset. Now it is the hotel itself that counts. If it is all right it matters little whether the proprietor is ever seen by his guests or not.

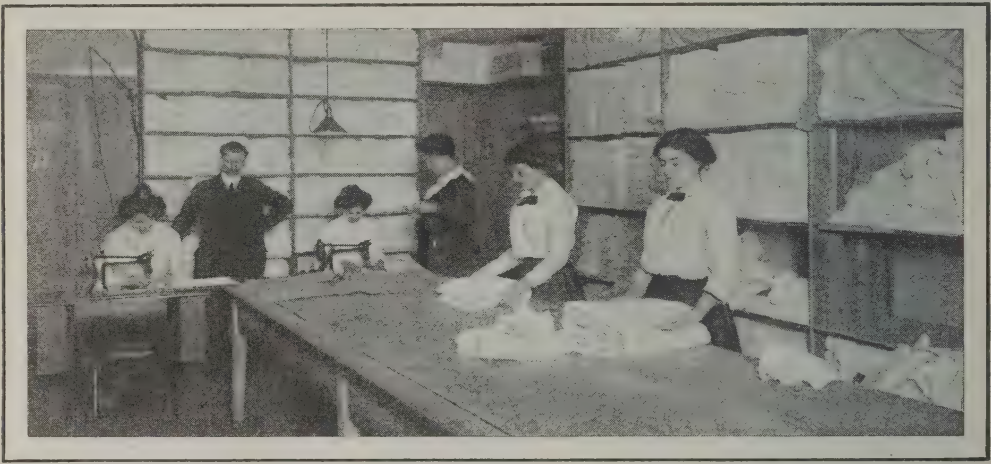
THE WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL, COVERING A FULL CITY BLOCK ON FIFTH AVENUE BETWEEN THIRTY-THIRD AND THIRTY-FOURTH STREETS. THE LONG FAÇADE IS ON THIRTY-FOURTH STREET

The manager of to-day has no time for hand-shaking or drinking or good-fellowship with guests. He is looking after their comforts in a strictly businesslike way, and this is an eighteen-hour-a-day job. The successful manager of a big metropolitan hotel is a man of first-rate ability—a man

ANOTHER TYPICAL HOTEL KITCHEN SCENE—THE ENTRÉE COUNTER AT THE WALDORF

A BUSY WALDORF KITCHEN COUNTER WHERE ONLY SALADS ARE SERVED

THE LARGE HOTELS NOW HAVE FOODS TESTED BEFORE THEY ARE SENT TO THE KITCHEN. THIS IS A VIEW OF THE LABORATORY AT THE McALPIN



A TYPICAL LINEN ROOM. THIS SCENE IS FROM THE HOTEL VANDERBILT

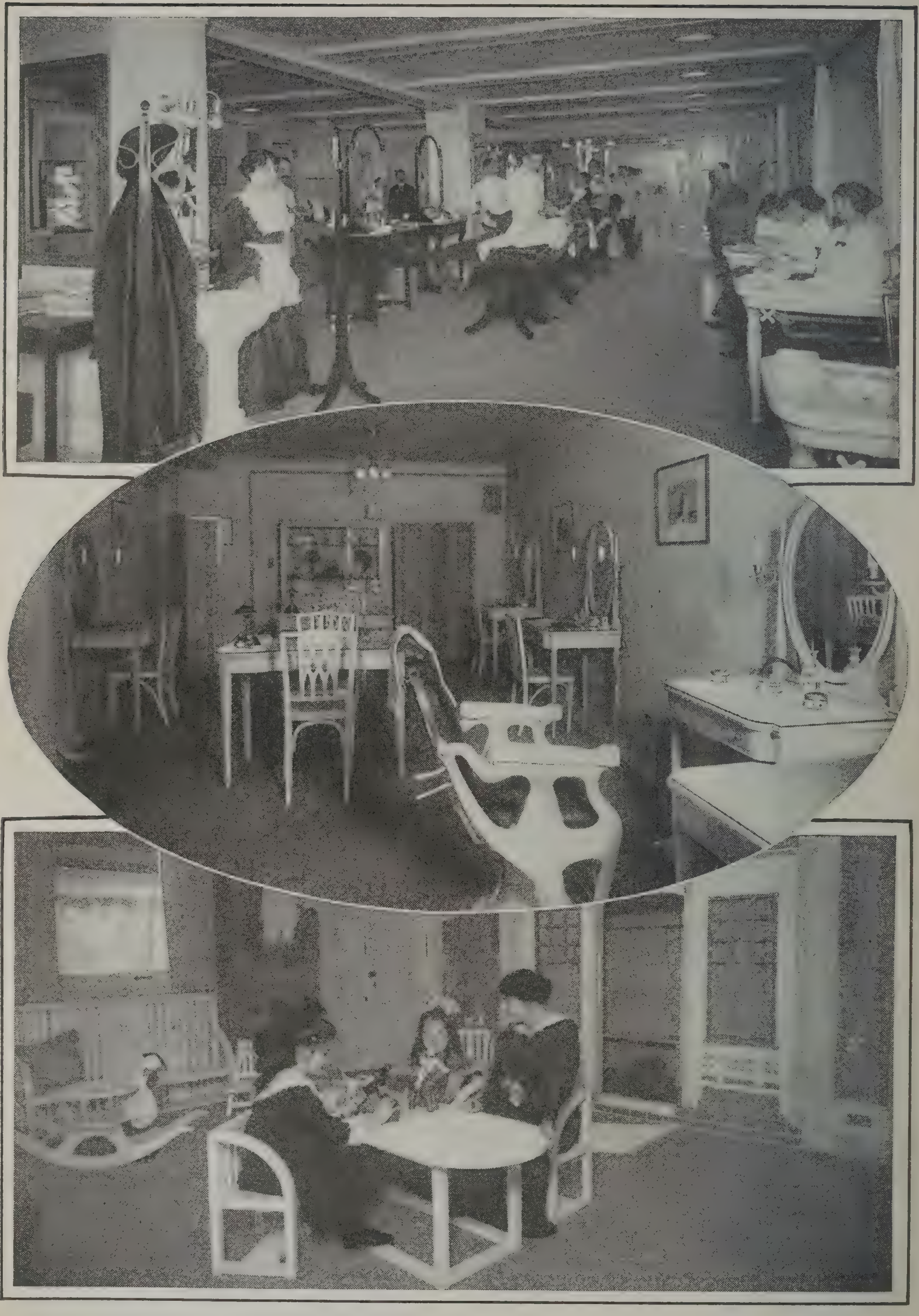
SERVICE ROOM AT THE ST. REGIS WHERE WAITERS CHECK UP THEIR ORDER SLIPS

WALDORF ROLLS. HERE IS WHERE THEY ARE MADE FRESH PRACTICALLY EVERY HOUR OF THE DAY

of the capacity to make good in banking, manufacturing, merchandizing, and other great lines. Chief among these is Mr. George C. Boldt, who initiated the modern hotel movement in America — a conception and execution which have been copied everywhere at home and abroad. Mr. Boldt is the acknowledged genius of the hotel world. He has vision, ideas, and fine artistic taste combined with rare executive ability.

Mr. Boldt's entrance into New York hotel management about twenty years ago, when he opened the Waldorf, now a part of the Waldorf-Astoria, marked the beginning of a new era in the hotel business. Prior to this, American hotels generally, even those of New York, were for the most part conducted on the so-called American plan—a plan which is

A HOTEL BAKE-OVEN. THE BAKERY DEPARTMENT IS A BIG FEATURE OF THE GIANT HOTEL



HOTEL VANDERBILT. TOP SCENE, MAIN BARBER-SHOP WITH MANICURE DEPARTMENT; SECOND SCENE, WOMAN'S HAIR-DRESSING ROOM; THIRD SCENE, PLAYROOM FOR CHILDREN

Photographs copyrighted by Brown Brothers, New York an abomination in the sight of Heaven and an economic crime.

With the opening of the Waldorf, the *à la carte,* or European plan, came in. In some hotels it had been adopted in part, but, practically speaking, the American plan prevailed everywhere. Quantity, not quality, was the old idea.

But the Waldorf, built under Mr. Boldt's direction, did more than bring in a new dining system. It gave us the first example of a modern luxurious hotel, with a profligacy of bathrooms and taste and elegance in furnishings and decoration that was epoch-making.

Though the Astoria side of the twin hotel was added some years later, and though we have the last word in hotel construction in the newest of our great palace hotels, nothing has much surpassed Mr. Boldt's pioneer idea of what a hotel should be.

All, or nearly all, of the important hotels of New York at the time of the opening of the Waldorf have disappeared. The great old Windsor Hotel, which in its day ranked first among the hotels of the world, had, as I recall, only one passenger-elevator and scarcely a private bath. There were a few in the wing that had been added on the Forty-Seventh Street side. Apart from these hardly a room had a private bath connected with it.

VANDERBILT HOTEL, AT PARK AVENUE, THIRTY-THIRD AND THIRTY-FOURTH STREETS

Photograph copyrighted by Brown Brothers, New York

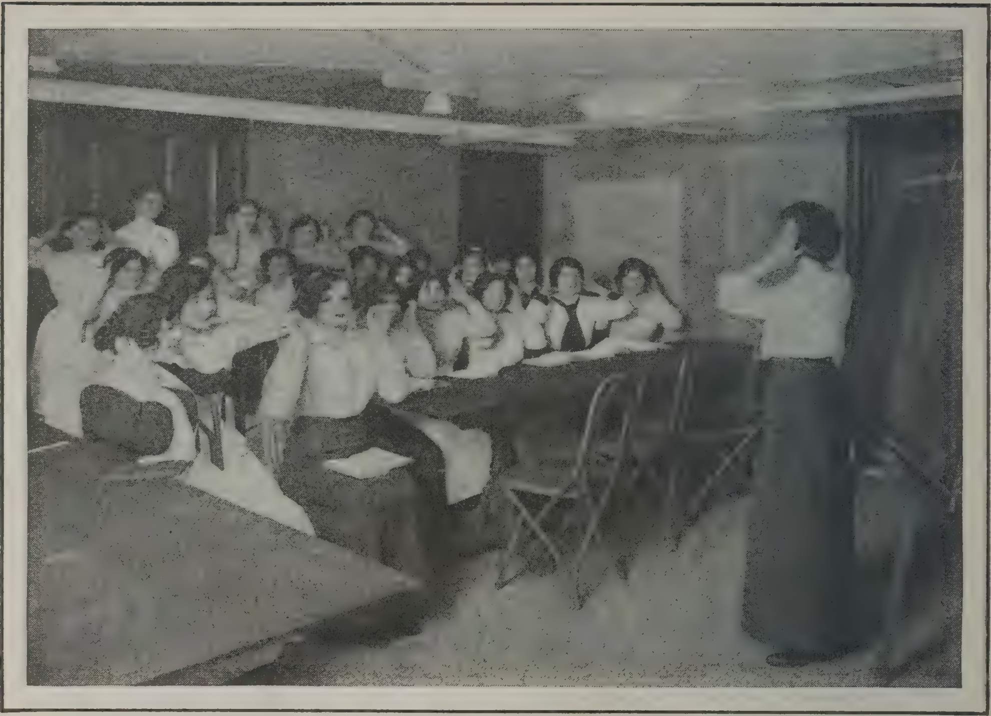
And this was only about two decades ago. So the private bath in the hotel is but a youngster in this country, and abroad it is just getting out of its swaddling-clothes. It swept over America like a contagion, even to our small towns, but

CHINA AND GLASSWARE IN THE SERVICE DEPARTMENT OF EACH FLOOR AT THE WALDORF. ALL BIG MODERN HOTELS ARE SIMILARLY EQUIPPED

SILVER CHEST AT THE WALDORF. THIS SILVER IS FOR THE MAIN DINING-ROOM ONLY

A RUSTIC NOOK AT ONE CORNER OF THE ROOF-GARDEN OF THE WALDORF-ASTORIA

EVENING SCENE IN THE ROOF-GARDEN OF THE WALDORF-ASTORIA. IN THESE GARDENS ONE MAY DANCE OR DINE, FAR ABOVE THE CITY'S HEAT AND NOISE



SCHOOLROOM AT THE HOTEL ASTOR WHERE THE HOTEL'S FOREIGN HELP ARE TAUGHT ENGLISH

RECREATION ROOM AT THE HOTEL ASTOR FOR THE MAIDS OF THE HOTEL—AN INNOVATION IN THE HOTEL BUSINESS AND A GOOD ONE in Europe it has not yet penetrated far beyond the great centers.

The incoming of the Waldorf meant the exit of the old type of hotel. The American public was quick to appreciate the new idea and would no longer put up with the hotels that had formerly been their favorites. To-day they are but a memory.

HOTEL ASTOR, FRONTING ON BROADWAY BETWEEN FORTY-FOURTH AND FORTY-FIFTH STREETS

The past twenty years have wrought a marvelous change on the hotel map of New York, and in hotel management and hotel life. The hotel of to-day is a town in itself, a great huge structure covering many city plots, a sky-scraper with its fifteen, twenty, or thirty floors, aggregating in all many acres—an acreage equivalent to a farm of no mean proportions.

Without steel frames, without elevators, without steam and without electricity the modern hotel could never have materialized. But many outside conditions have contributed as well to its development, and none more so than the servant problem.

There are few words in America more objectionable to our citizens than that word, " servant." So it is that most Americans would rather accept almost any work than that which characterizes them as servants.

Hotels are manned by " help "; private houses are manned by " servants." Hence the antipathy of Americans to working in private homes. They will work vastly harder in a hotel and live on the none too good hotel fare in preference to the comforts, easier work, and better food of private service. In hotels they have more independence, fixed hours, enjoy a wider

A SECTION OF THE WINE-SHELVES AT THE WALDORF

social life among their fellow workers, and are not servants.

Then, too, the cost of maintenance of the private home of any considerable pretensions, with the investment in ground and buildings, with taxes and upkeep, makes the private home, apart from the servant problem, a questionable economic method of living.

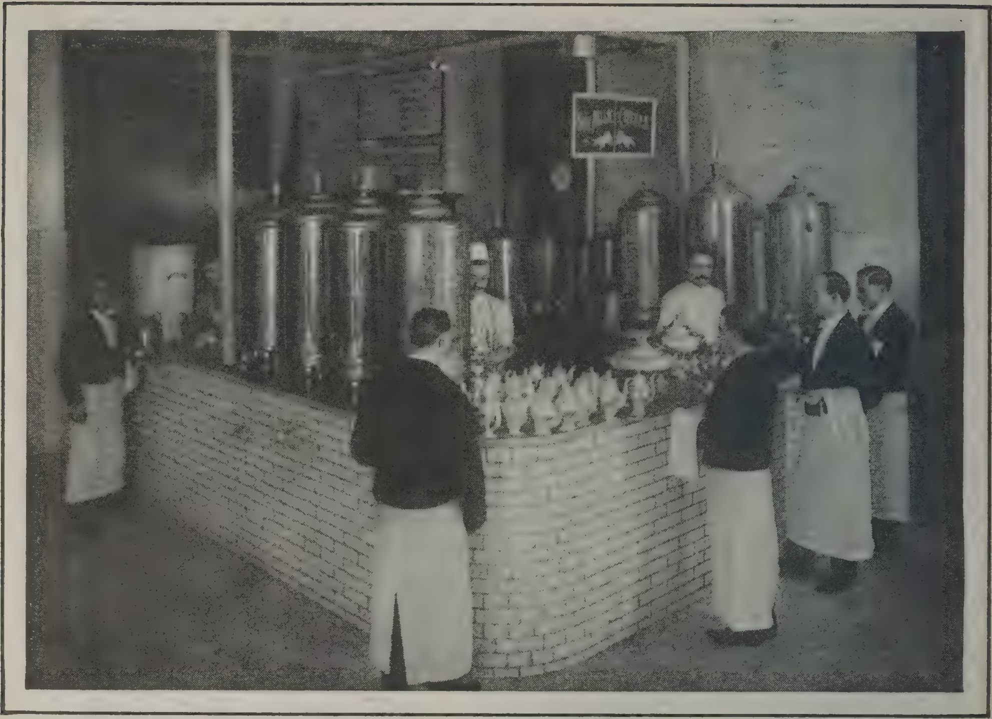
The well-to-do family is most influenced by the incoming of these modern palace hotels. The very poor, the poor, and those of limited means who run their homes without servants, doing their own work, have shown no tendency to abandon the individual *ménage* for the community kitchen. Neither have the millionaires and the multimillionaires as a whole been driven to the hotel plan of living. Many of them, however, have in preference given up their houses for the easier life of the hotel—a life free from responsibility.

ONE OF THE MANY SUPPLY ROOMS IN THE STEWARD'S DEPARTMENT AT THE WALDORF

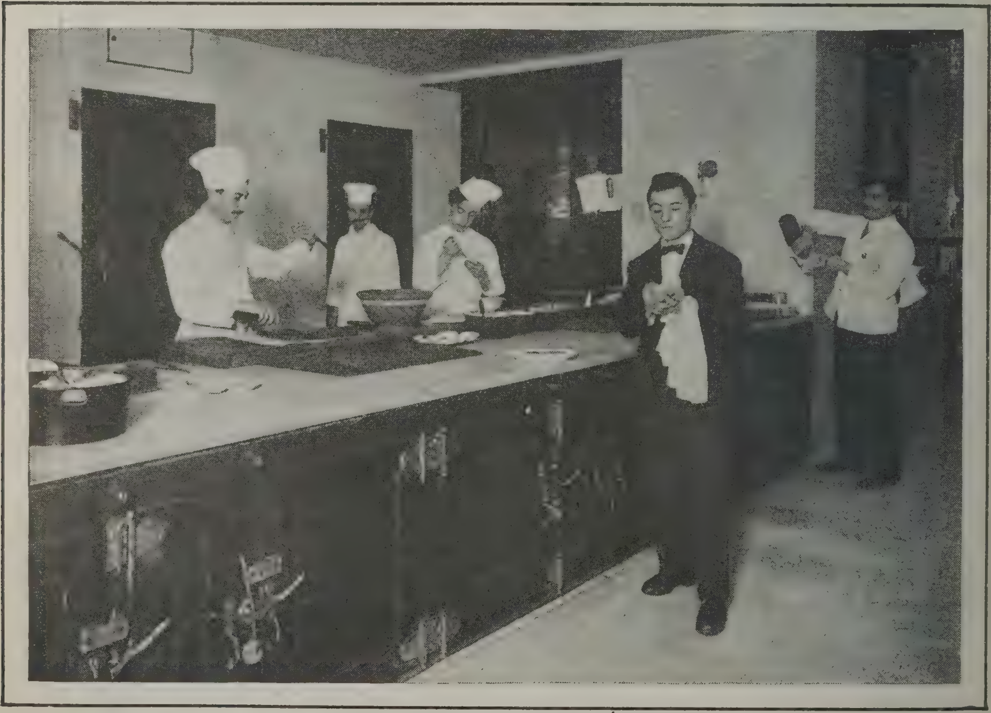
This result is due in part to the migratory tendencies of the rich of to-day, who

PLAZA HOTEL, FRONTING ON CENTRAL PARK AT FIFTH AVENUE AND FIFTY-NINTH STREET

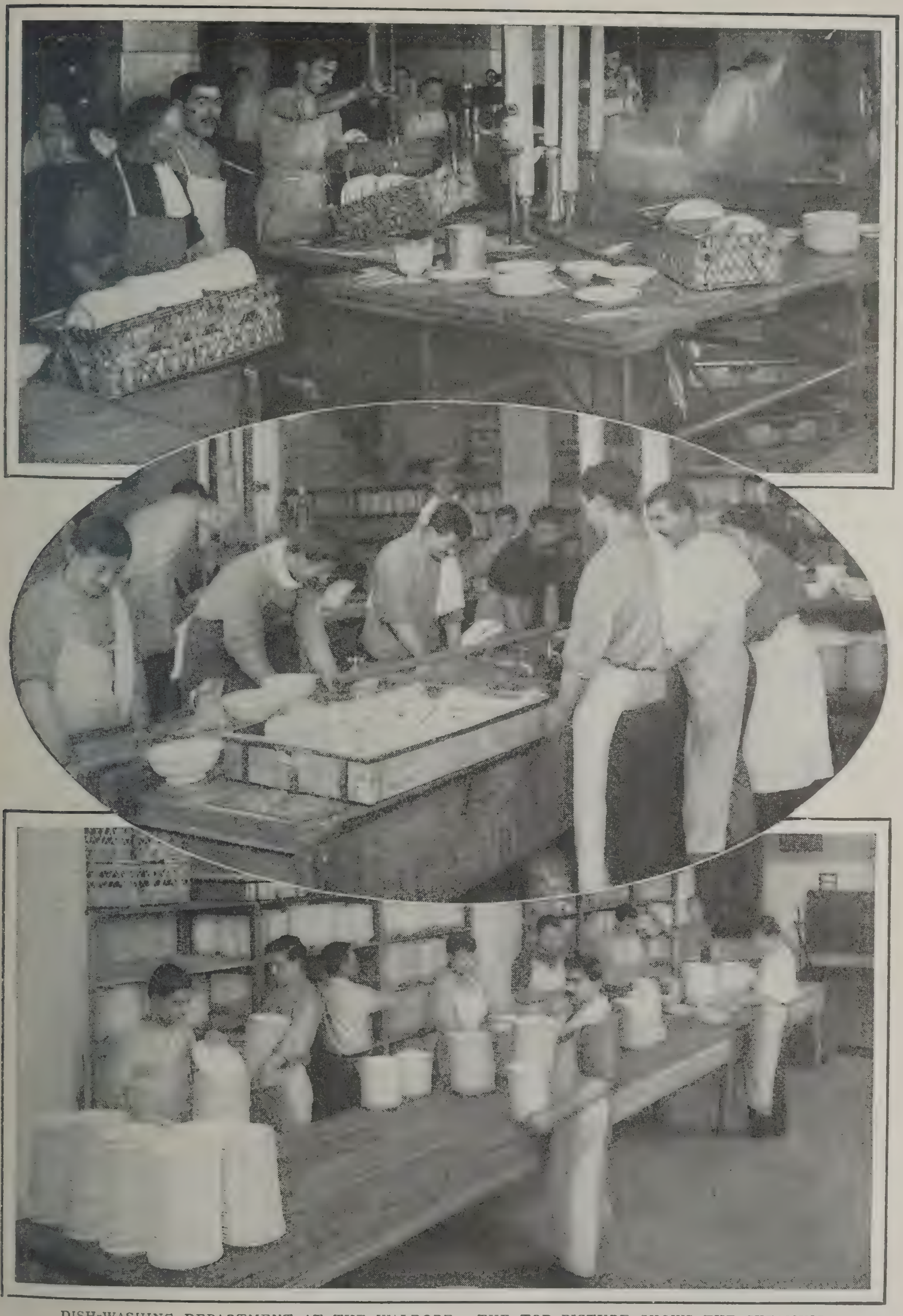
TEA-ROOM AT THE PLAZA. THIS IS TYPICAL OF THE TEA-ROOMS OF OTHER HOTELS



A TEA AND COFFEE COUNTER AT THE WALDORF. THIS COUNTER IS GIVEN UP EXCLUSIVELY TO THIS PURPOSE

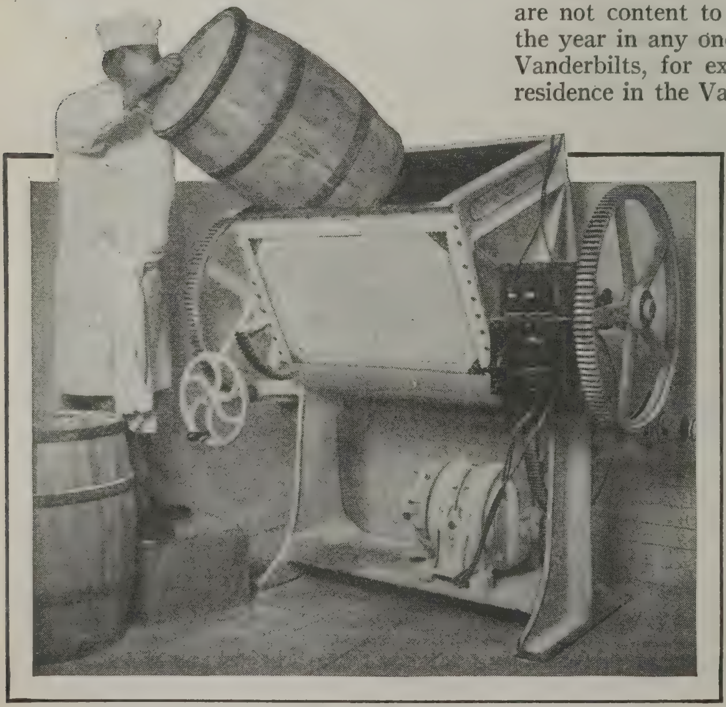


A ST. REGIS KITCHEN CORNER WHERE NOTHING BUT SEA-FOODS ARE PREPARED AND SERVED



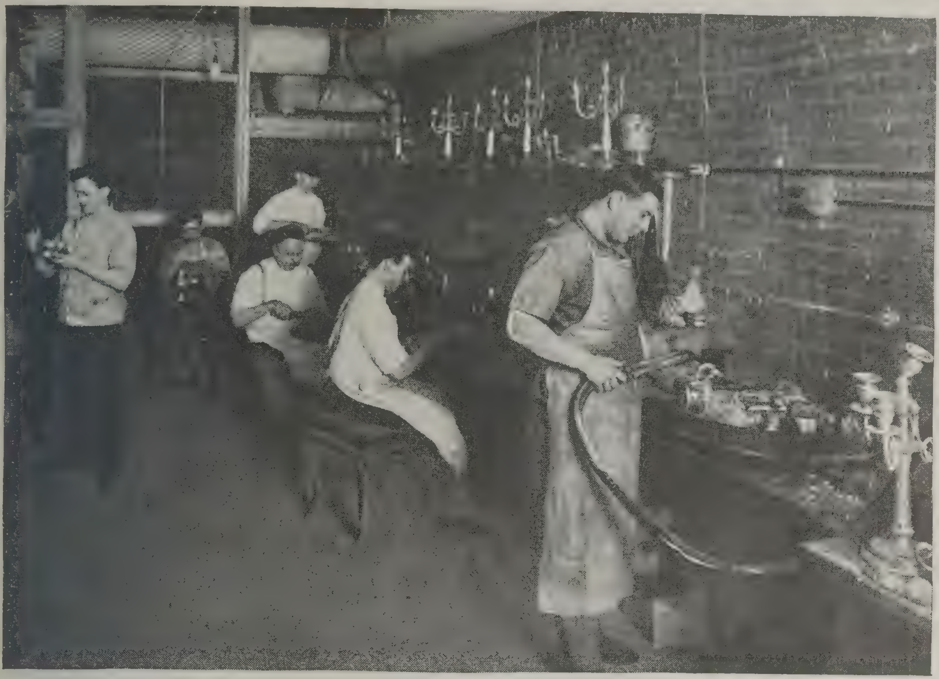
DISH-WASHING DEPARTMENT AT THE WALDORF. THE TOP PICTURE SHOWS THE STEAMING PROCESS, THE CENTER ONE THE MACHINE WASHERS. ALL BIG HOTELS DO THEIR DISH-WASHING IN THIS WAY. THE LOWER VIEW SHOWS THE INSPECTION

ANOTHER BAKE-SHOP SCENE—THIS ONE AT THE ST. REGIS. WITH BAKING ON PREMISES, HOTELS MAY ALWAYS BE SURE OF FRESH-BAKED ROLLS AND OTHER BREADSTUFFS

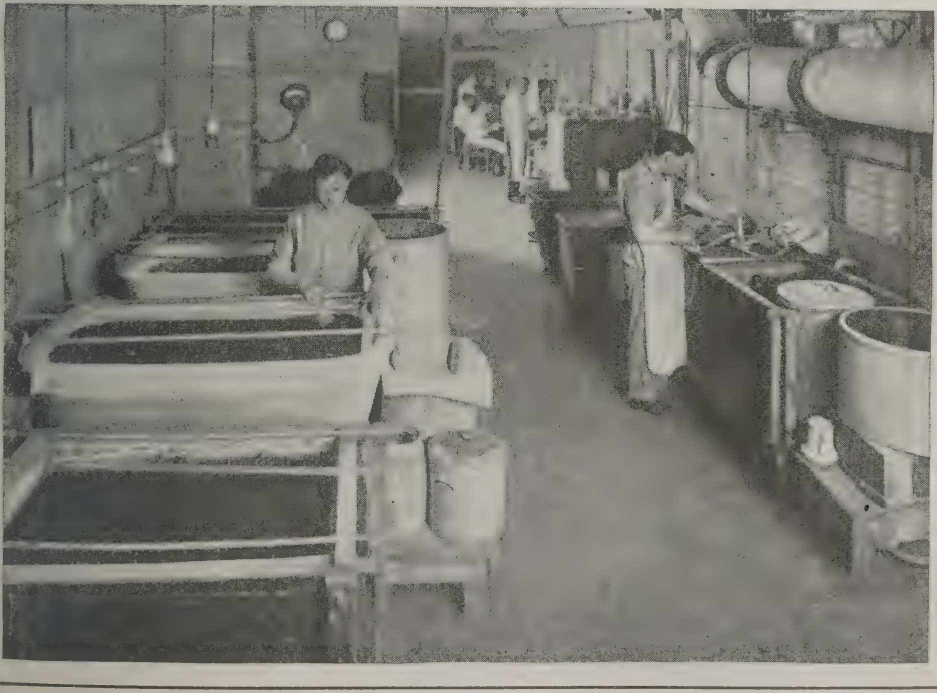


A DOUGH-MIXER. THIS CAPACIOUS MACHINE TAKES IN THREE BARRELS OF FLOUR AT A TIME

are not content to spend many months of the year in any one place. The Alfred G. Vanderbilts, for example, have their town residence in the Vanderbilt Hotel, a sumptuous apartment high up in the air, away from the noise and dust of the street. The real home of the Vanderbilts, as is the case with so many others, is in the country, so even with the millionaires there is a considerable swing from the individual city home to hotel life. With the middle rich it is pronounced. Because of the high cost of houses, and the maintenance of a corps of servants, with their ever-increasing wages and with the very serious difficulty of getting good servants



THE BIG HOTELS REPAIR ALL THEIR SILVERWARE. THIS PICTURE SHOWS THE WALDORF REPAIR SHOP



THE BIG HOTELS ALSO REPLATE THEIR SILVERWARE. HERE IS THE REPLATING PLANT OF THE WALDORF

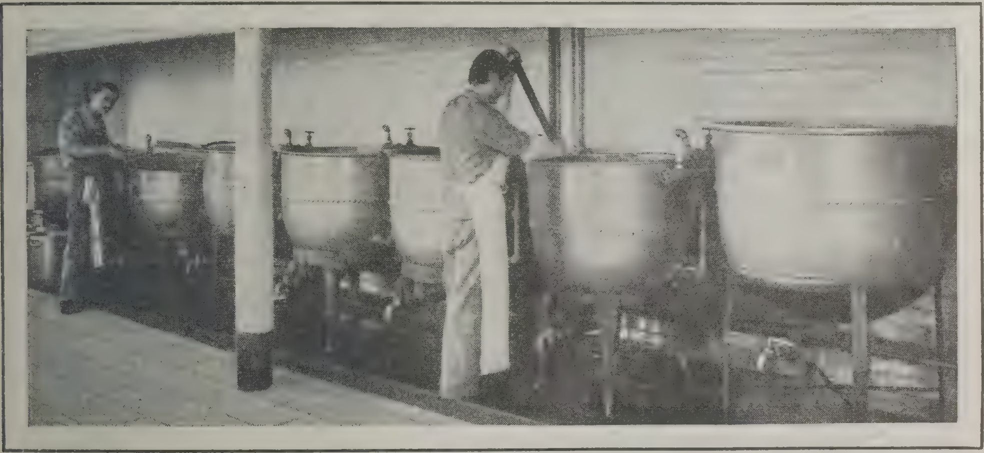
EXTERIOR VIEW OF HOTEL McALPIN, BROADWAY, THIRTY-THIRD AND THIRTY-FOURTH STREETS

Photograph copyrighted by Brown Brothers, New York

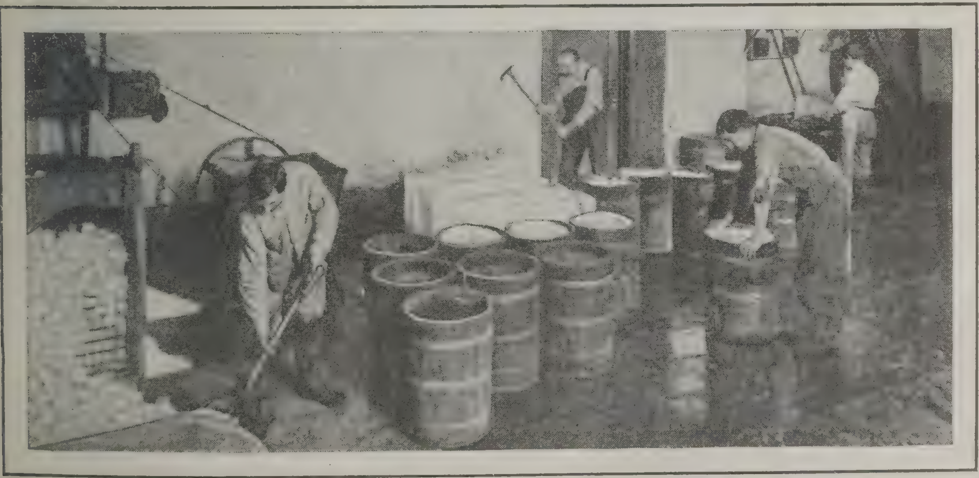
the maintenance of an individual residence in New York has become a big problem. As a consequence there is a very decided trend toward hotel life for the months in town.

The residence of three or four stories in height occupies ground that is taxed the same as it would be if it carried a twenty or thirty story building. The value of the ground is determined by what it would

OYSTER DEPARTMENT AT THE WALDORF WHERE HALF A DOZEN MEN ARE KEPT BUSY ALL THE WHILE OPENING OYSTERS—TWENTY THOUSAND A DAY

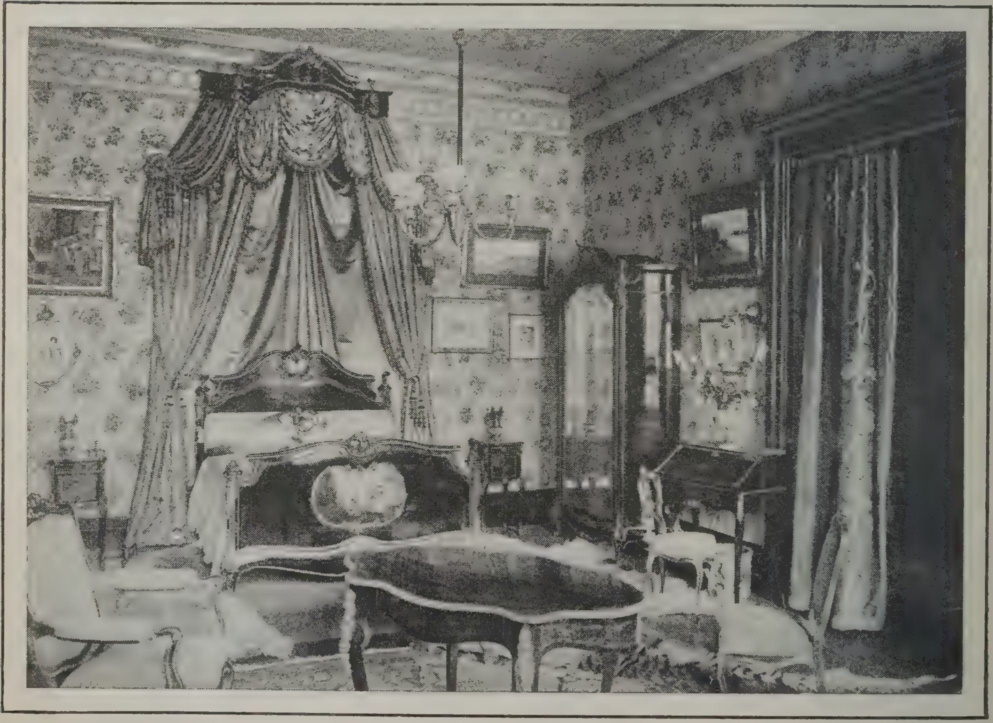


IT TAKES SOME SOUP TO SUPPLY A HOTEL LIKE THE WALDORF. HERE IS THE SOUP MANUFACTORY



ICE ROOM AT THE WALDORF. IT IS NO SMALL JOB TO SUPPLY THE HOTEL WITH CRACKED ICE ALONE

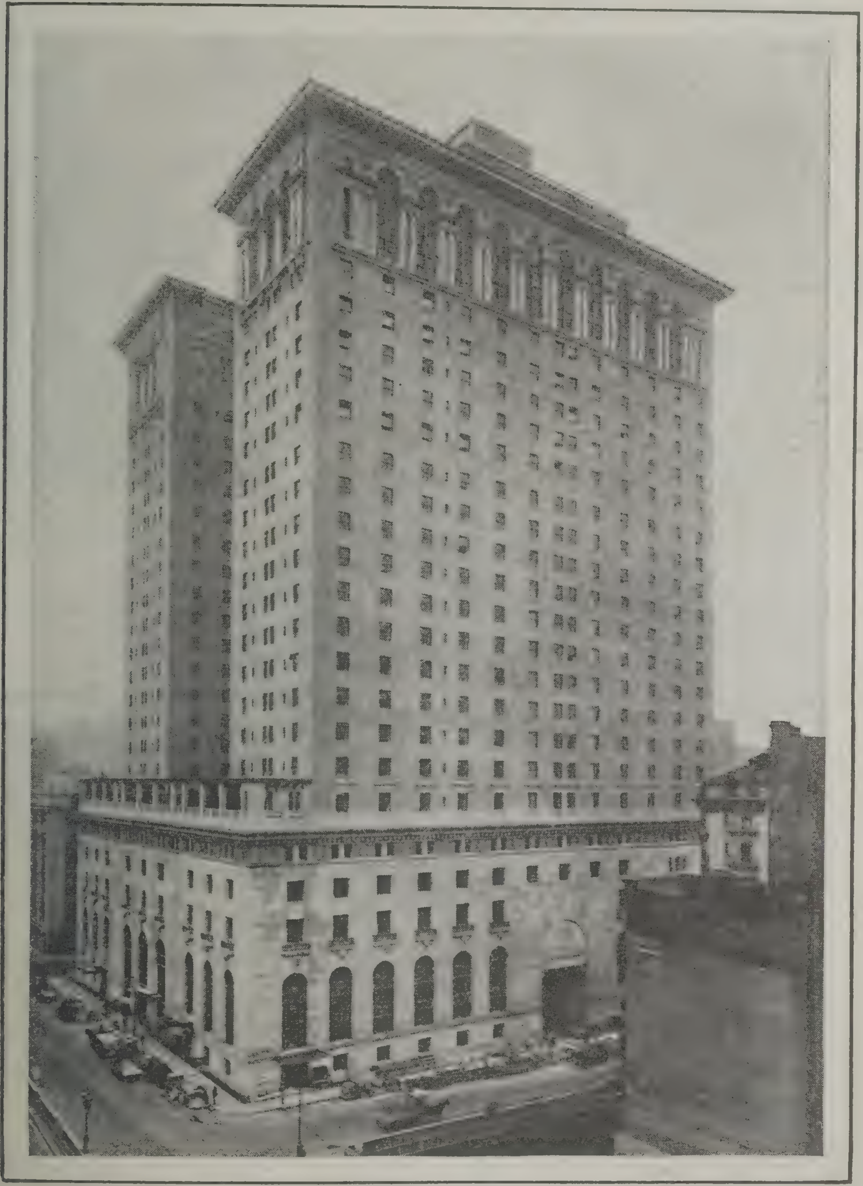
ONE OF THE DINING-ROOMS AT THE WALDORF-ASTORIA



A TYPICAL LUXURIOUS BEDROOM OF THE WALDORF-ASTORIA earn with a tall building on it. The ground value, therefore, of an individual house in a desirable residential neighborhood is grossly out of proportion to the value of the house itself, except it be a show place.

With office structures and hotels the building on a valuable plot should cost, to be in safe proportion, two or three times that of the ground. If inexpensive ground, the building should cost five or eight times that of the ground. This economic theory is entirely reversed with the average private residence, built on a high-priced plot.

The modern palace hotel isn't an accident or the monument of a dreamer. It



THE BILTMORE HOTEL, MADISON AVENUE, FORTY-THIRD, FORTY-FOURTH STREETS, AND VANDERBILT AVENUE, OPENED ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

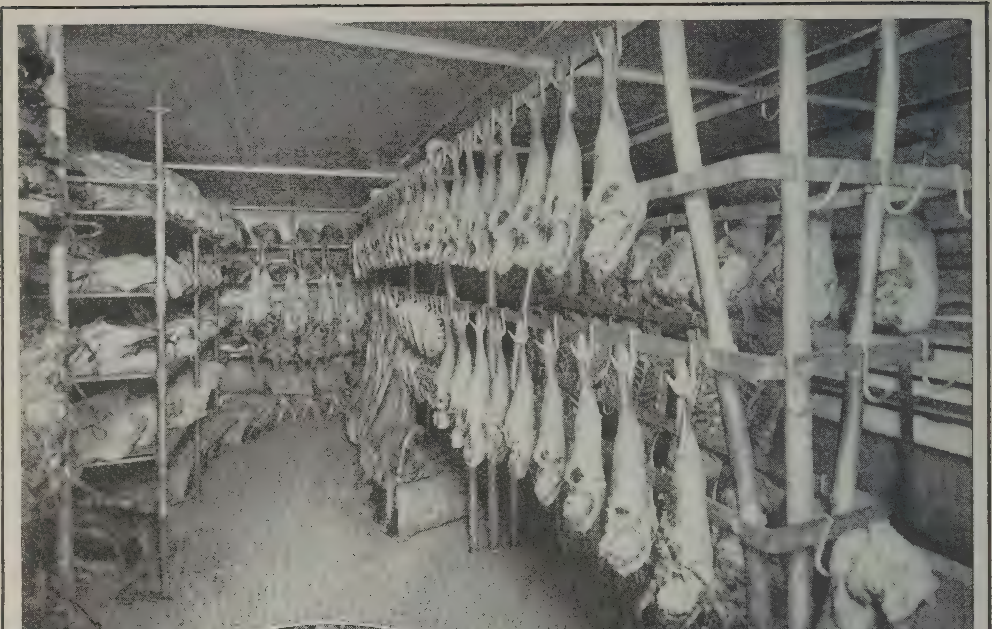
Photograph copyrighted by Brown Brothers, New York

THE TOP PICTURE SHOWS THE MANGLES IN THE LAUNDRY AT THE WALDORF. THE CENTER ONE THE WASHERS AT WORK

THE LAUNDRY DELIVERY ROOM AT THE WALDORF WHERE LAUNDRY IS SORTED AND DESPATCHED

ANOTHER WALDORF LAUNDRY SCENE—IRONING DEPARTMENT

THE WALDORF LAUNDRY TURNS OUT HALF A MILLION PIECES A WEEK OR TWENTY-SIX MILLION PIECES A YEAR—AN ENORMOUS BUSINESS IN ITSELF. THIS SCENE SHOWS THE LACE-CURTAIN SECTION



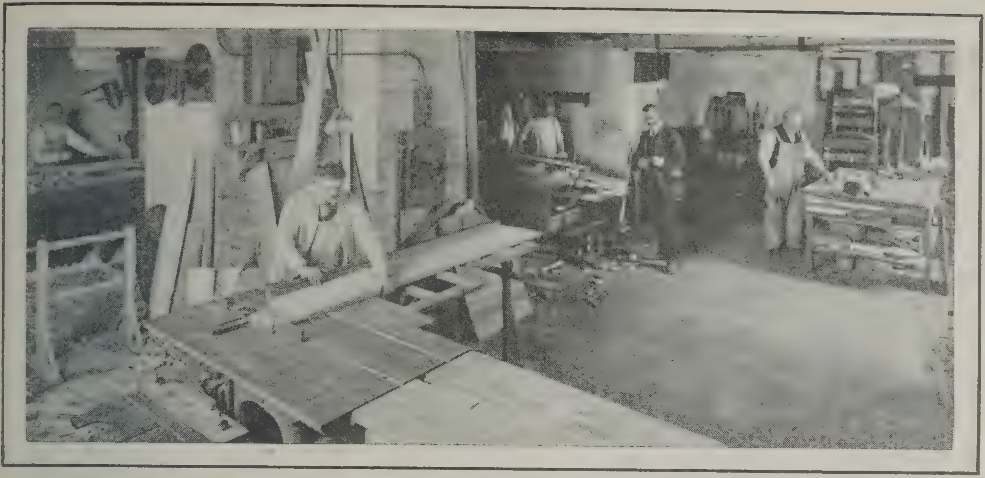
COLD-STORAGE ROOM FOR MEATS AT HOTEL MCALPIN

A SMALL SECTION OF THE CELERY BINS AT THE WALDORF

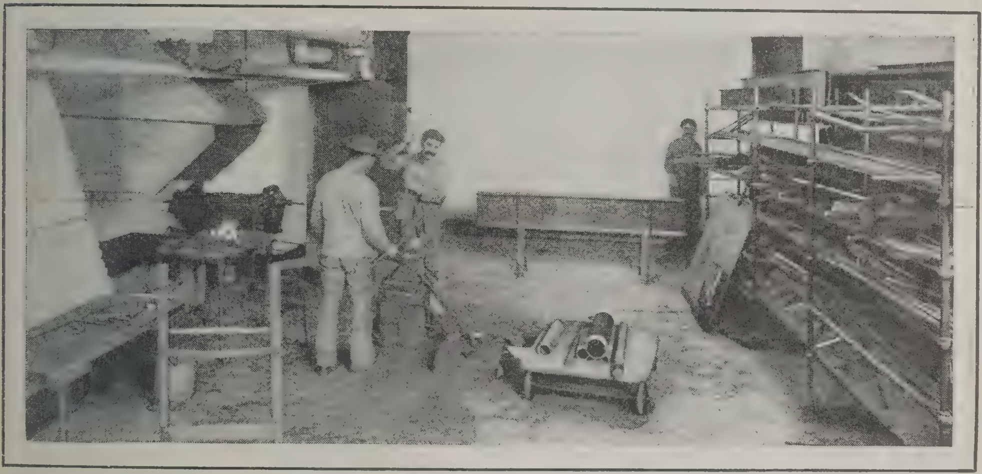
has come in response to a very positive demand and is as practical a business proposition as the manufacture of steel and iron.

America is a rich country, populated with men and women who are born travelers and have the means to gratify their wishes. These people require the same comforts away from home they get at home. And this means that hotels must measure up to the standards of the home. New York has an army of bachelors who find in the modern hotel a home to their liking. Some of these men of ample means live in their clubs, some in restaurant-apartments, others keep house, but the great majority flock to the hotel for their abode.

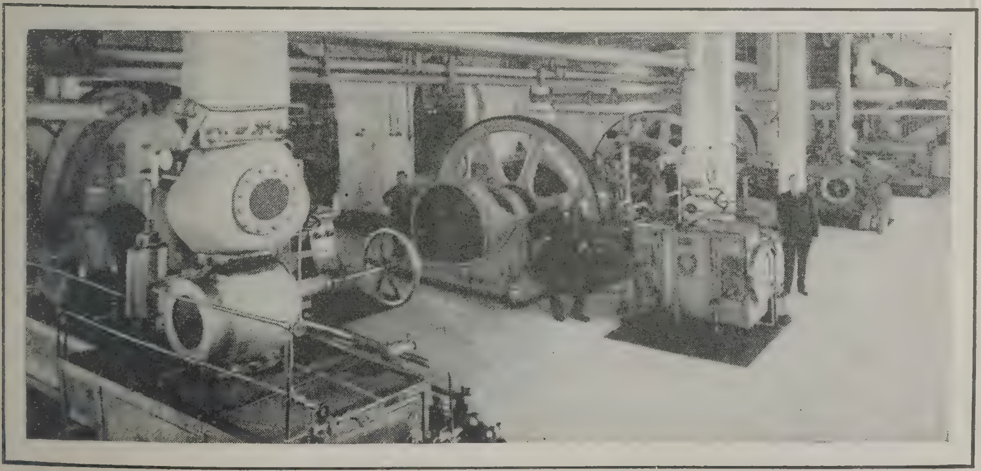
The giant hotel of twenty or thirty stories is strictly an American creation, an American necessity. The cost of operation compelled its mammoth size. In Europe, there are many very excellent small hotels which are conducted with a profit, as there are likewise many excellent small, even tiny, restaurants that are profit-bringers. In this country these are not possible. The overhead cost of conducting them, with the high price of labor here, makes them prohibitive.



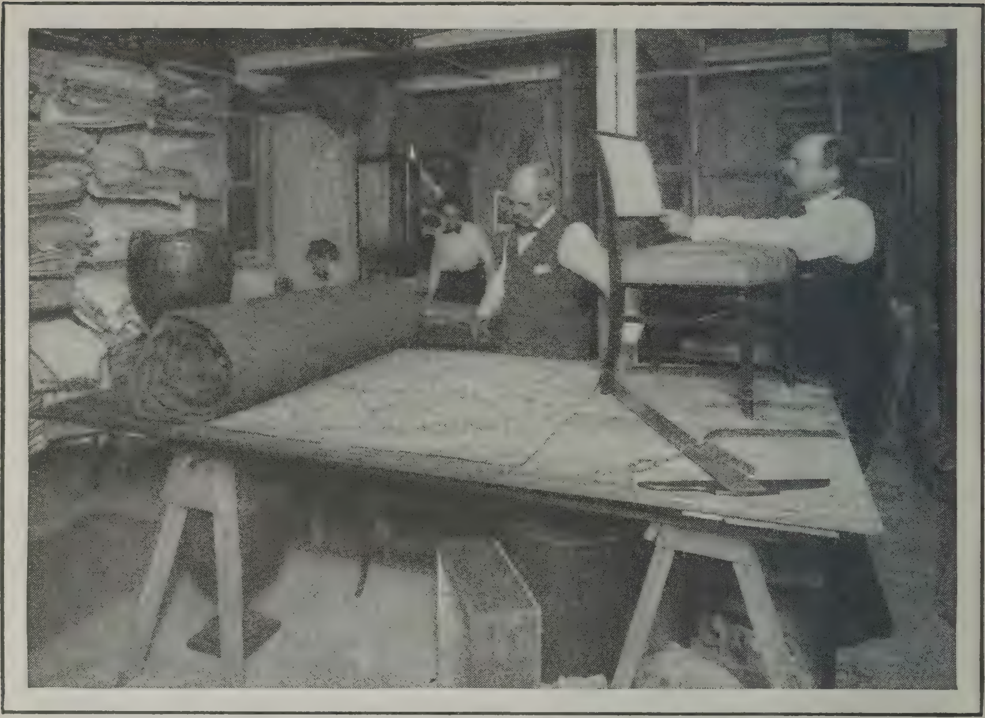
THE CARPENTER-SHOP AT THE WALDORF FOR HOTEL REPAIRS AND UPKEEP



THE BLACKSMITH-SHOP AT THE WALDORF FOR HOTEL REPAIRS AND UPKEEP

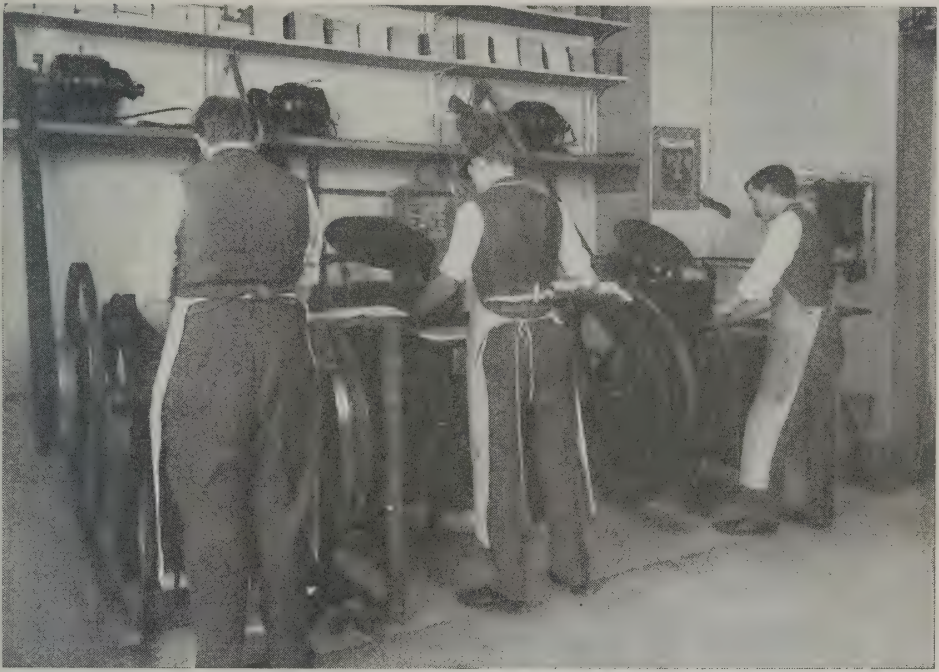


A CORNER OF THE DYNAMO-ROOM AT THE WALDORF-ASTORIA

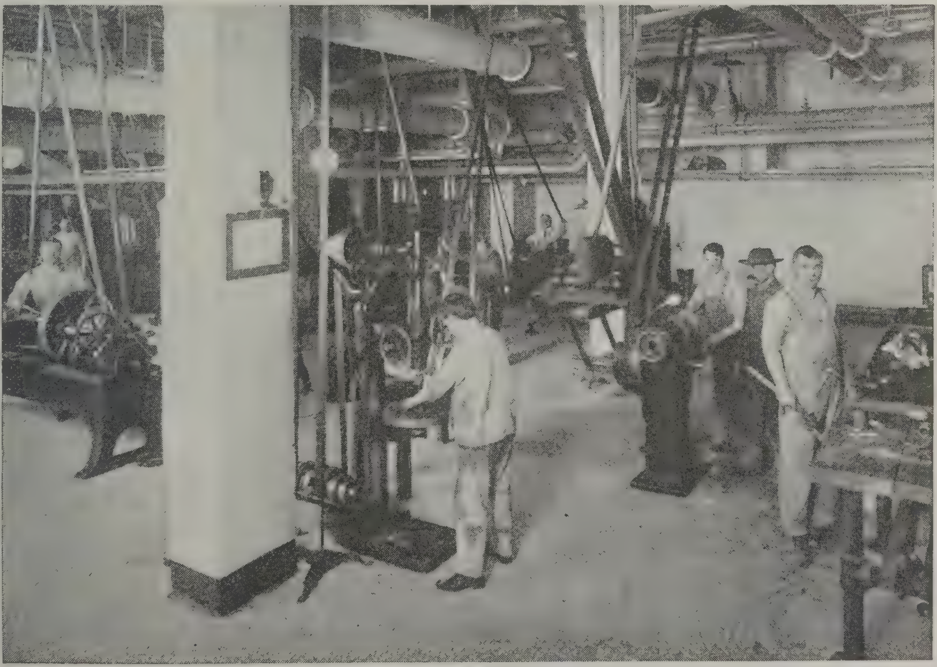


A SECTION OF THE UPHOLSTERY DEPARTMENT AT THE VANDERBILT HOTEL

A SECTION OF THE CIGAR DEPARTMENT AT THE WALDORF-ASTORIA



THE JOB PRINTING-SHOP AT THE WALDORF FOR PRINTING MENUS AND OTHER SMALL WORK.

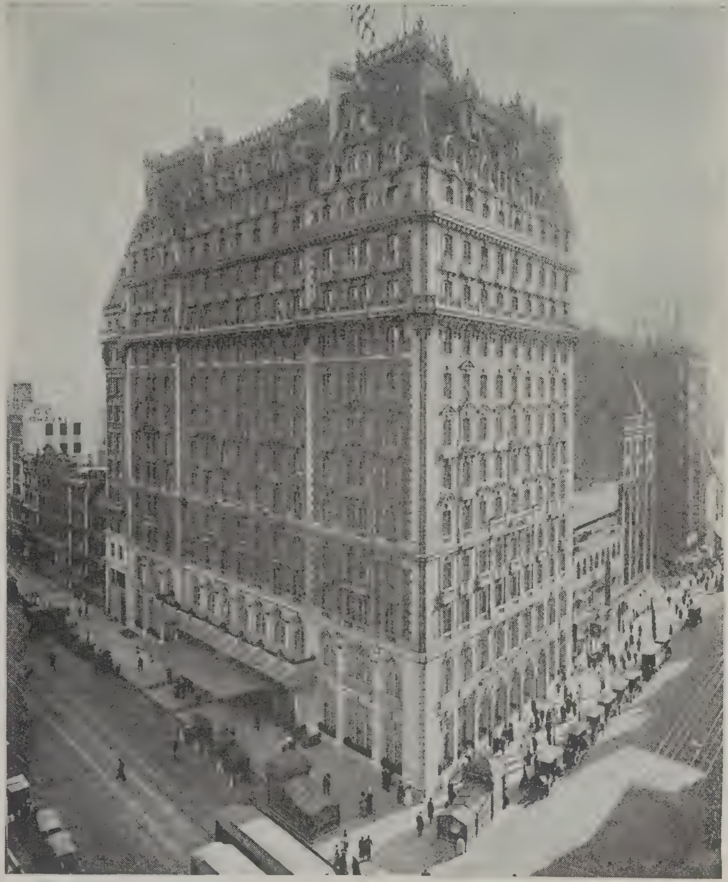


THE WALDORF MACHINE-SHOP, A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE INTERNAL WORKINGS

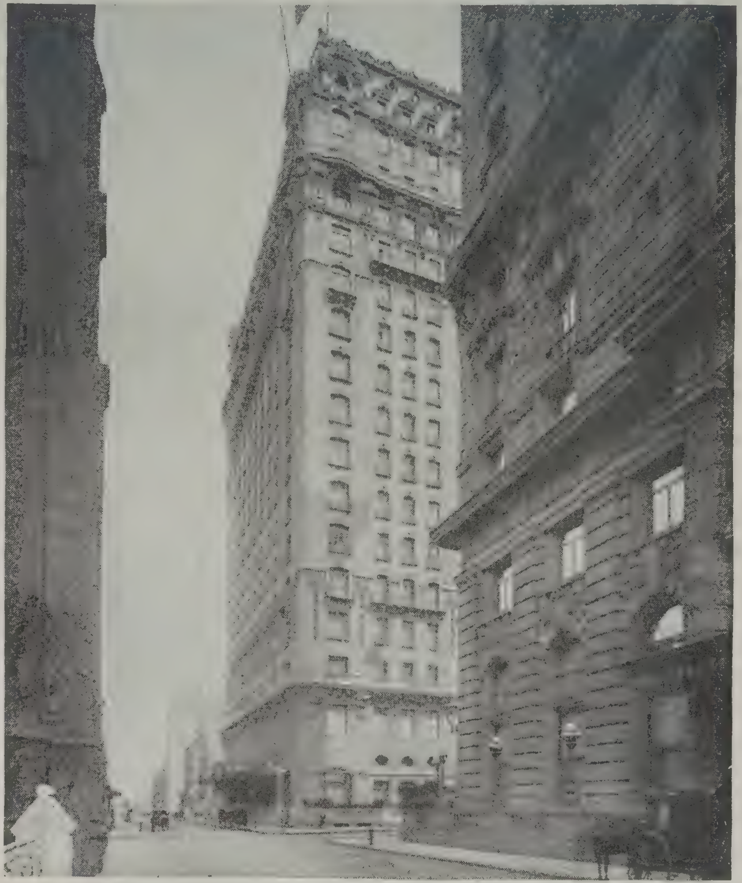
HOTEL BELMONT, FRONTING ON PARK AVENUE AND RUNNING FROM FORTY-FIRST TO FORTY-SECOND STREET

For example, the hotel of two hundred rooms would require its manager, its staff of clerks, its engineers, its electricians, its head waiter, its housekeeper, its head porter, and its *chef* with his corps of assistants. The great big hotels of a thousand rooms or more have practically the same heads of departments. This, therefore, means one of two things, either that the small hotel must have small-salaried men, meaning less skilful men than the big-salaried men of the big hotels, or that the revenue obtained from the rooms and the restaurants and other sources will not be sufficient to operate the small hotel profitably. It is obvious, therefore, that the big hotel can operate its rooms at a much smaller cost per room, and it is from the rooms that it makes its chief profit. On the other hand, if the small hotel is manned by an inferior force it follows that it cannot command the patronage of that portion of the American public which demands first-class hotels.

There are, of necessity, hotels of all grades for people of all means, even down to such establishments as the Mills hotels, designed especially for men of the most slender purse. But as an economic proposition it holds true here in America that the small hotel of good grade is not a practical business proposition. The small hotels, like the old type of American hotels, are disappearing, giving way to those big enough to be run on an economically sound basis. In Europe, wages are relatively so low, and the cost of maintenance and operation so low, that restaurant-keeping or hoteling are entirely different propositions from what they are

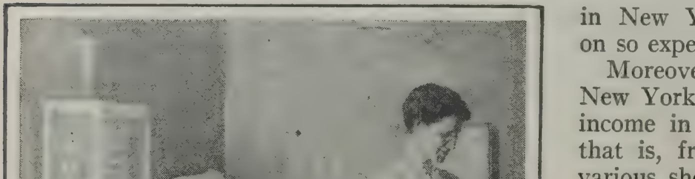


THE KNICKERBOCKER HOTEL, ON ONE OF THE BUSIEST CORNERS IN NEW YORK—BROADWAY AND FORTY-SECOND STREET



VIEW LOOKING EAST THROUGH FIFTY-FIFTH STREET. THE GOTHAM ON RIGHT WITH ST. REGIS DIRECTLY OPPOSITE, ACROSS FIFTH AVENUE

AND NOW THE HOTEL HOSPITAL!—THE OPERATING-ROOM AT THE McALPIN

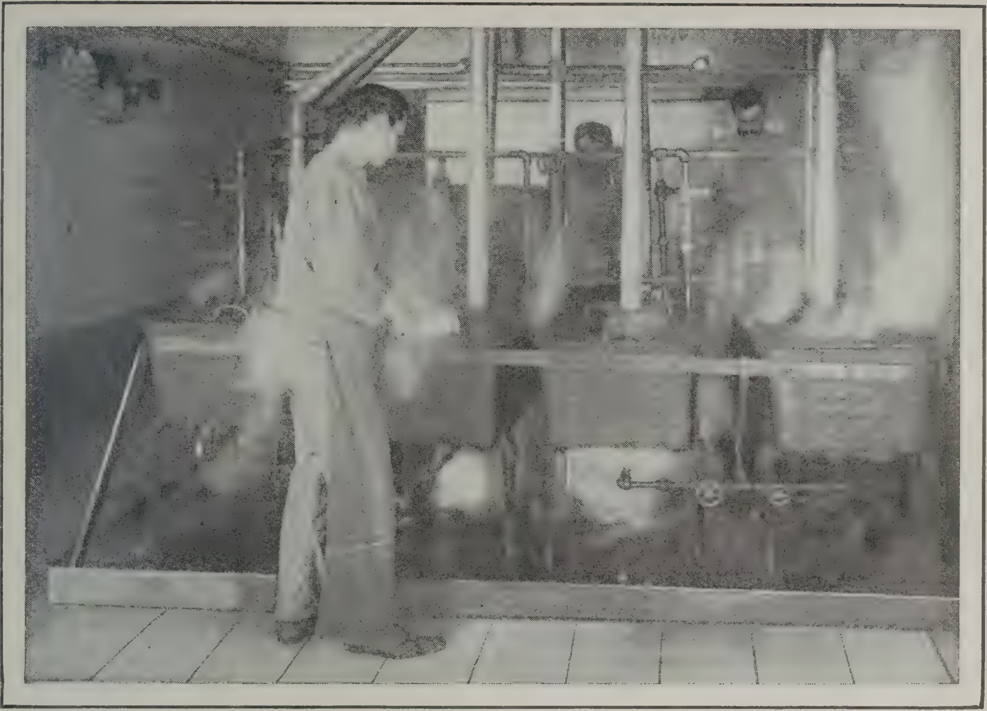


ANOTHER HOSPITAL VIEW—THIS ONE AT THE HOTEL ASTOR

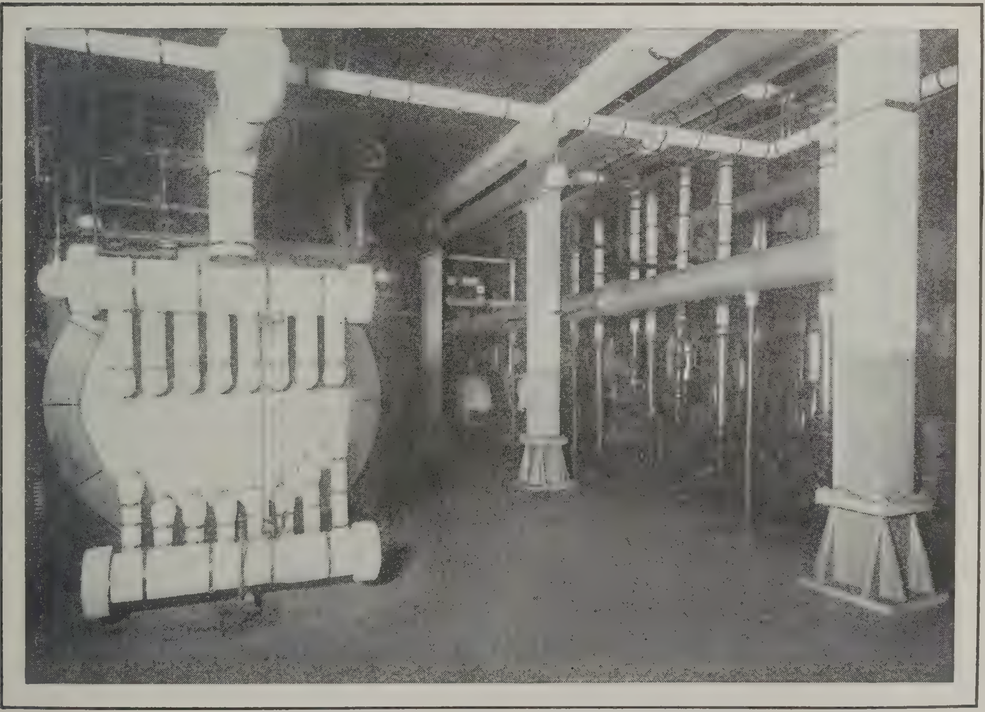
in New York, where everything is on so expensive a scale.

Moreover, the biggest and best New York hotels have a tremendous income in the way of by-products, that is, from rentals from all their various shops — haberdashery, women's wear, brokers' offices, manicure parlors, drugstores, florists, bookstalls, *et cetera*—an aggregate income from these numerous sources of as much as one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year —figures that go a long way toward paying interest on the entire hotel investment. Then, too, there is the important income from ballrooms and banqueting - rooms, amounting to a tidy sum in addition.

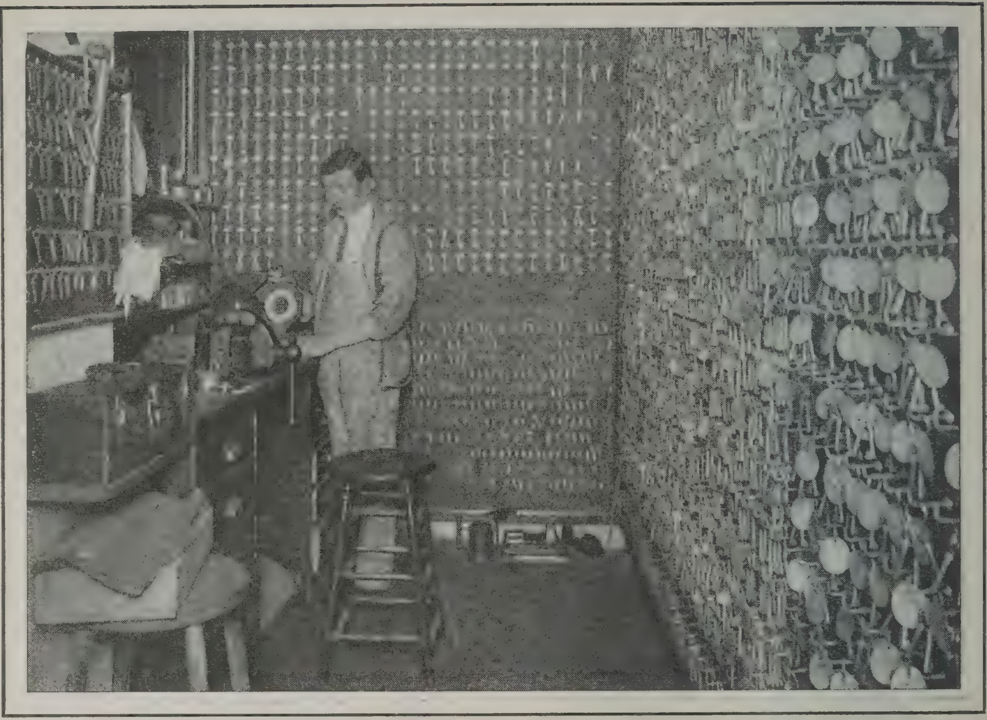
The hotel of to-day is managed on the most



BOILING POTATOES BY STEAM AT THE WALDORF—SIXTY BUSHELS A DAY. STEAM GIVES BETTER RESULTS AND IS QUICKER



THE REFRIGERATING PLANT AT THE WALDORF-ASTORIA



THE KEY ROOM AT THE VANDERBILT—REPAIRING AND MAKING NEW

Photograph copyrighted by Brown Brothers, New York

THE WALDORF. "NEWING" UP THE GLASSWARE BY GRINDING OUT THE NICKS scientific business lines. It does everything itself in its subterranean levels, where a shading in expense can be saved over having work done outside. It runs its own laundry, its own carpenter-shop, its own cabinet-shop, its own upholstery-shop, its own machine-shop, its own plumber-shop, its own blacksmith-shop, its own electric plant, its own plant for replating silver, and in a word, all plants for upkeep and repairs.

The hotel business in America of the first grade has come to take its place beside other kinds of business of big dimensions and in its earnings it ranks well to-day with the best. It is one of the few, of real scope, that isn't government controlled. Indeed it now offers well-nigh the most alluring reward of any field of endeavor under the Stars and Stripes.

In New York there are a number of hotels with a record of annual profits of approximately half a million dollars. There are likewise a goodly number that can show half this amount and there is one giant that has earned well over a million dollars net in a single year, with the probability that it has averaged close to this sum annually for many years. These figures are net earnings after paying rent, interest charges, and with such allowances for wear and tear as characterize the methods of wisely conducted business houses.

The giant New York hotel is a complete community in itself, the population of which measures up to a town of no mean size. A twelve-hundred-room house, for example, would accommodate 1,500 to 1,800 persons and these, together with the help necessary to man it, would total from three to four thousand human souls.

There are two distinct types of hotels in New York, one the strictly residential hotel, and there are hundreds of these—the other the general hotel, which serves alike the transient and the residential public. The giants among the latter are mainly in and adjacent to Fifth Avenue, covering a stretch of territory from Twenty-Third Street to Fifty-Ninth Street. Chiefly conspicuous among them are the Waldorf-Astoria, the McAlpin, the Vanderbilt, the Belmont, the Biltmore, the Manhattan, the Knickerbocker, the Astor, the Claridge, the Ritz-Carlton, the St. Regis, the Gotham, the Savoy, the Netherland, and the Plaza.

These fifteen hotels, ranging in number of rooms from about 500 to 1,200, and averaging say seven or eight hundred rooms, mean a total of over 10,000 rooms—room capacity enough to house fifteen thousand guests, a population, including help, equivalent to that of many thriving cities.

The modern hotel is a well-standardized creation. Hotels will vary in size, vary slightly in arrangements, but in the main there are no great improvements in sight for them, although the bath-rooms could be improved by the substitution of the shower in place of the tub. The elevators have reached a high degree of efficiency and safety, the telephone service in room, the heat, the light, the care of rooms, and general attention, are all up to a good standard.

The giant hotel is so complete in itself that one might almost live a lifetime within its walls and still be able to see and know the world and to procure from within the hotel itself practically everything one would require in the way of necessities or luxuries or entertainment. And, as a matter of fact, some of these big hotels have theatrical performances, musicales, operas, lectures, and entertainments of various kinds.

In them, guests get first-rate valeting and private maid service, without the expense of maintaining individual servants. With Turkish baths, and private hospitals and private dining-rooms, and meal service on every floor, with telegraph-stations, ticket-offices, with brokers' shops, bookstalls, and all under the same roof, there would seem to be little within the range of desirability that guests could well wish added.

There is, however, one avenue open for very great improvement. This is in the way of providing proper ventilation. No hotel or private residence, as at present constructed, is a fit habitation for man. People think if they have an outside window to their sleeping-room it has ventilation, but this by no means follows. If the wind happens to be on their side of the house the room gets plenty of fresh air. If the wind happens to be on the other side, it gets practically none. There is little or no circulation.

An evidence of the value of proper ventilation is found in the great benefit universally derived from sleeping in the open air, a custom that is growing rapidly both in town and country. But with a hotel or private house so constructed that fresh air is taken in from the roof and forced in through tubes, rooms would always have a perfect circulation of air, and sleeping out of doors would no longer be necessary. This innovation in construction is simple and practical. It is particularly easy of accomplishment in a hotel, with its system of machinery, and no hotel should be built without it. Indeed all existing hotels should be remodeled accordingly and it were well if all private houses were treated in the same way.

The public wants in its hotels abundance of light and air, good baths, good beds, good food, good attendance, cleanliness, spaciousness, simplicity, good taste, and plenty of elevators. It cares nothing for pretense and show — nothing for the evidences of squandered money in fripperies, ornate decoration, and heavy, stuffy furnishings. The simpler all these things the better the public likes them and the cost of investment is tremendously reduced.

A unique feature of the giant hotel is the summer roof-garden—miniature country scenes with shrubbery, flowers, and fountains. Here, shot up twenty or thirty stories above the heat and noise and dust of the street, those forced to remain in town may dine in the cool of the night, to the alluring strains of music and amid flowers and frills and friends.

An idea of the tremendous size of these giant hotels of New York may best be conveyed in acres. The Waldorf-Astoria, the biggest in the town, has an aggregate floor space of twenty-three acres. This, of course, covers all the floors from the lowest basement to the roof.

The Biltmore, the very last word in hotel construction, comes next in size with an aggregate floor space of eighteen and a quarter acres. The Plaza has fifteen and a quarter acres, the Astor fifteen acres, the Ritz-Carlton fourteen acres, the Belmont twelve and a quarter acres, the Manhattan eight and three-quarters acres, and the Vanderbilt eight acres, a total of one hundred and fourteen and one-half acres of floor space in these eight hotels alone.

A report recently made to the Merchants' Association says there are in Greater New York twelve hundred and forty-five transient hotels of one grade and another, including the so-called Raines-law hotels. The strictly residential hotels and residential restaurants are not included in this list and of these there are a great number.

The aggregate floor space of all New York hotels of all kinds, residential and transient, must amount to thousands of acres, perhaps to many, many thousands. But vast as is the hotel business of New York to-day, another twenty years will see it doubled. All the while people will come more and more to live from the community kitchen, which is slated to supersede, in large measure, the kitchen of the individual *ménage*.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The preponderance of Waldorf interior pictures in this article is due to the fact that we found more good, clear photographs, suitable for engraving, of the Waldorf than from other hotels. This is the only reason why this hotel is illustrated more fully than others. As a matter of fact the interior working departments of all the big, up-to-date hotels might as well be represented in a composite picture, they are so nearly standardized.

IN THE TEETH OF TIME

WERE your bright face the clock of day,
Dear minutes could not steal away:
Your slender hands so firmly held,
Time's tyranny would seem dispelled!

Were your slim form life's hour-glass,
No aging grain would I let pass:
Melted by my enkindled gaze
To luster of immortal glaze!

Were your sweet voice death's bugle-note,
Its summons would be antidote
For more than all my years of pain,
A listening, until then, in vain!

Richard Butler Glaenzer

ACCORDING TO SOLOMON

BY HORATIO WINSLOW

THE "judge" had outlived his best days; everybody said so, and that was probably why everybody crowded the little improvised court-room to see him try his last case before the election that would oust him.

The judge's parlor and sitting-room were packed with all those good people of Pineland Center who could break away from their households and affairs.

"He'll lose Tuesday by more'n forty votes," whispered the popular proprietor of Pleiss's general store.

At the end of the parlor, behind the marble-topped table across which fifty years of decisions had thundered, sat the Hon. Elbert Henneway, J. P., with good-natured blue eyes.

"Court'll come to order," piped his honor. "Case of Abiathar Samlett versis Henry L. Podd. And let's remember 'fore we begin that we're all neighbors—growed up together, most of us—and a good deal more interested in right and justice than in book law. If we can git right and justice 'thout tangling ourselves up with a mess of lawyers it's better in the end *and* cheaper."

"Time the old man was movin' on," muttered Mr. Pleiss. "Pineland Center's big enough to have the same kind of law they got in every live town. I bet George Bigler beats him Tuesday by a major'ty of fifty-five, anyhow."

Having squinted at the scrawled legal cap before him, the judge continued briskly: "We won't waste time asking people who they are or what they do or anything else foolish. Mis' Link, would you just as soon sit on the chair in the middle and answer a few questions, and Abiathar, you move over there onto the organ seat."

The plaintiff and defendant faced each other — Abiathar, weather-beaten, inscrutable, one rheumatic leg stretched stiff before him, and the other, a man in the late twenties, pink-necktied and scowling. Mrs. Link, whose eyes were swollen from recent weeping, sat down in the rocker appointed.

"Now, Mis' Link, Abiathar Samlett and Henry Podd been boarding with you for a long time, ain't they?"

"You know it, Elbert, 's well as I do. I set 's good a table as any woman in town—considerin' prices. Abiathar's been there ever since his wife died in 1902, and Mr. Podd come three years ago."

"Both of 'em good boarders, ain't they? Paid their bills regular?"

"I haven't a word to say ag'in' either of 'em," remarked Mrs. Link firmly.

"Glad to heart it—glad to hear it." The judge rubbed his hands. "That's the way it should be. Now then, Abiathar's spent his evenin's for the last ten years inventin' a potato-peeler—ain't he?"

Mrs. Link nodded.

"But Henry Podd says he's been inventin' a potato-peeler, too. Now I don't suppose you know which—"

"No, I don't," snapped Mrs. Link. "But they was both of 'em forever putterin', and never did I have two wuss cluttered rooms to tidy than the rooms that those two lived in."

The judge reached under the table to pull out an object that resembled a coffee-grinder with a hopper at the top and a crank at one side.

"Now, Mis' Link, you couldn't say for sure, could you, whether this machine here was made by Abiathar or by Henry?"

"No," answered Mrs. Link, "I couldn't. And I told you so less'n an hour ago."

"Exactly," said his honor; "so here's the invention that Henry and Abiathar are fussin' about — the potato-peeler." He drew from his pocket one of those uninteresting but important vegetables which figure so largely in plain cooking. "You drop the potato in here." He dropped it in. "Twist the handle." He twisted it while a thin, whitish curl wriggled from a slit at the side. " Keep on twistin'. Keep 'er going. And then twist some more. And there you are."

He drew out the potato, neatly but effectively undressed.

" No adjustin' needed. Takes care of any size potato. Looks as though it might be wuth a pot of money to the boy that invented it. The question is which done the inventin'." He smiled genially first at sixty-year-old Abiathar Samlett and then at the younger Podd.

The spectators stirred uneasily, as though anxious for the old gentleman to get down to the nub of the matter.

" Now," the court continued, " everybody remembers the circumstances. Mis' Link's home was burned to the ground Wednesday, just at the time Abiathar was seeing Doc Courbell about his rheumatics. But Henry Podd was in the house, and he run out hanging onto this machine which he says he invented. Each of 'em claims it, and each of 'em says the fire burned up their drawin's and such like. So there's no use looking for proof that way. Now whose is it? Abiathar "—he turned to the rheumatic one—" did you invent this potato-peeler and make this here model with your own hands?"

Mr. Samlett nodded vigorously.

" And how about you, Henry?"

" It's my invention," declared Mr. Podd in a loud voice. " I made that model myself, and when the fire come I carried it out myself. I'm gonna patent it and I won't let nobody get it away from me."

The judge nodded. " There you are," he said. " Both of 'em good, honest, respected men in the community, and both of 'em claim the machine. Now I s'pose if I was up to date—so to speak—I'd have a couple of slick lawyers in here asking questions till everybody was black in the face. But I don't believe in that sort of thing, so I'm going to ask you, Doc, to bring me that ax in the corner. I fetched it up from the wood-shed on purpose."

Wonderingly the doctor advanced with the heavy-bladed wood-cleaver and laid it across the marble slab beside the machine. The judge stood up, the fingers of his right hand closing around the ax-handle.

" Now, folks, you all know I don't go much on book law, but every now and then I find something in a book that sounds reasonable. This question makes me think of a case that come up a good many hundred years ago, before old King Solomon. It wasn't about a potato-peeler, though; it was about a little child. One woman says she was the mother of the child and the other says *she* was. What did old King Solomon do? I'll tell you."

The judge beamed at the court-room, which looked back, very much puzzled. Abiathar sat stolidly, while Henry twisted his head about as though the collar rasped.

" Old King Solomon says: ' Bring me my sword,' and they brung it. ' Now,' he says, says he, ' I'm going to cut this little baby in two and give half of it to each of you two women.' " The judge tightened his right arm. " And that's what I'm going to do here. Except that instead of just cuttin' the invention in two I'm going to smash it into little pieces and weigh 'em, and give half to Abiathar and half to Henry. Then they'll both be satisfied."

He raised the ax, but before he could bring it down Henry had bounded forward and caught the weapon.

" You keep your hands off," he shouted. " I ain't going to let you smash my model up. This ain't any reg'lar court of law, and if you bust one single joint I'll have you in jail."

" Henry," said the judge, " you must've been reading the Bible. You remember the woman that really owned the child wouldn't let Solomon cut it up because she says, says she: ' If you go cutting up my baby it won't do either of us any good. Let it live.' "

" You bet," assented Henry with evident relief. " That's what I say, too. I made this model, and it's mine, and I'm not going to have it smashed by anybody."

" Sounds reasonable. Looks like Henry has the best of the argument," said the judge. " But, after all, an invention model ain't a baby. What do you say, Abiathar, shall I smash it or not?"

The man with the rheumatic leg settled himself more comfortably. " Go on and smash it," he said. " Smash it to smithereens, and I'll prove it's mine by building another just exactly like it."

Tuesday night, when the votes were counted, it was found that the Hon. Elbert Henneway, J. P., would be retained in office by a clear majority of 104. Though it would have been a mere 103 if Mr. Podd had voted instead of leaving Saturday by rail—or, rather, by *a* rail.

AT WHAT AGE DO LITERARY MEN DO THEIR BEST WORK?

BY RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

CERTAIN scientists and philosophers seem to take a pleasure in depressing their fellow men by the promulgation of startling theories of disappointment. They are not usually intellects of the first rank, and their conclusions are vitiated for the discerning by the very evident melodramatic cast of their minds and a suspicion that they are not averse from that advertisement which your true scientist and philosopher are the last to court.

The names of Nordau and Lombroso naturally occur to one by way of illustration, and Dr. Osler, some five years ago, gained no little notoriety by the profound discouragement which he brought to men over forty. When one has reached that age he might as well, for "all the uses of this world," be dead and buried, and your man of sixty was as much a mummy as though he had lain in an Egyptian pyramid for two thousand years. Dr. Osler is something of a humorist, as he is a very entertaining writer, and he may not have been entirely serious. Yet the world, or at all events, the newspapers, took him seriously for a time, being prone as it is to push on one side the graying head and to credit the aggressiveness of youth with a monopoly of creative power.

Now, in the field of literature, this paralyzing conception has obtained no less than in other fields of human activity.

The fact that certain young poets have died premature dramatic deaths has established a certain picturesque convention, amounting almost to a superstition, which limits the production of poetry, particularly lyric poetry, to youth and early manhood. This erroneous, but colorable, notion is on a par with the starvation theory of poetry, the garret and candle-end and bread-and-water régime for poets who, it is fabled, have usually gone hungry and fireless and unprovided alike with overcoats or negotiable appreciation.

As a matter of fact, the starved poet is a rare exception, and a mere glance through any history of literature will suffice to show that, on the contrary, most poets and literary men generally have either had private incomes, been made comfortable by kings or other admirers, or have been substantially supported by their readers. This only by way of a side illustration of the tendency to fallacy in popular conceptions of all forms of greatness, which the world prefers to believe the result of miracles rather than processes—or, if it must accept processes, prefers them to be as desperate and romantic as possible.

Actually, comparatively little of the world's great poetry, or the world's great literature generally, has been written by what romance would call young men, that is, by men under forty. Most of it has been done by men aged between forty and sixty, men often well on into their fifties, and no little of its greatest has been written by men over sixty and even over seventy.

Literary work that has the leaven of poetry in it is rightly regarded as that of the first importance. For that reason purely lyrical poetry, as rising fountainlike from deep springs of mysterious inspiration, is given a place in the esteem of mankind which may, on some valuations, seem disproportionate. From one point of view it amounts to little more than musical exclamation of joy or sorrow, the sense of beauty or the stress of emotion translated into rhythmical, singing words. Such poetry, it has been assumed, is, naturally, produced in the heyday of the blood, in that adolescent period which has scarcely had time to deal with the facts of life and knows as yet no realities but its dreams.

Allowing the valuation set upon such poetry by the world at large, it is, for my present purpose, only of interest to inquire whether in literary history youth has shown itself in undisputed possession of such inspiration and such measures. Opening at random any good anthology of lyrical poetry, you will find this:

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the
bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the
heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the
shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine—wonder,
wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth that's brighter than gem,
Trust that's purer than pearl—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—
All were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

This poem, as, of course, is well known, appeared for the first time in Robert Browning's last volume, "Asolando," published on the day of his death, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. Nor was it any exception in his record, which, when his purely philosophical and crabbed and whimsical poems are left to dry-as-dusts, will be acknowledged more and more to be that of one of the greatest of English lyric poets.

Tennyson's position as a lyric poet, great as it was from the beginning, would hardly be as secure as it is if, in his eighty-first year, he had not written "Crossing the Bar."

Swinburne's greatest poem, that in which all his powers were combined in the fullest mastery, was "Tristram of Lyonesse," and that was not published till he was well into middle age.

I have thus first considered lyric poetry in regard to the age-limit for the production of literature, for the reason that it has been too carelessly assumed that lyric poetry must necessarily be produced by young men; the point I wish to make, and for which I have the support of literary history, being that in addition to those other forms of literary production which demand the ripening of time, that experience and varied knowledge of life which can only come with living, the older man is just as likely to sing with the "fine, careless rapture" as the youngest poet that ever committed suicide or fell in a tavern brawl or destroyed his health and prematurely sapped his talents with absinth or other forms of dissipation. Those whom the muses love do not by any means always die young.

Indeed, when one comes to put such a whimsical, wrong-headed theory as that of Dr. Osler's to the test of biography, the contradiction between theory and fact is so amazing that one wonders how any one ever had the courage to announce as a truth a fallacy which any schoolboy could explode. For there is little more inspiring in history than the continuing creative activity of men, who, if mere youth or "fame" were its mainspring, had long before achieved beyond the necessity of ambition.

The perpetual creative youth of such "old" men as Æschylus, Socrates, Petrarch, Erasmus, Châteaubriand, La Fontaine, Voltaire, Goethe, Swift, Dr. Johnson, Defoe, Landor, Leigh Hunt, De Quincey, Wordsworth, Moore, Lamartine, Béranger, Hugo, Littré, Grimm, Michelet, Von Ranke, Max Müller, Carlyle, Froude, Hallam, Mommsen, Bancroft, Parkman, Washington Irving, Lowell, Emerson, Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Whitman, Holmes, Charles Reade, Meredith, Morris, Tolstoy, Björnson, Ibsen, Mark Twain—to make a motley collection of the names of men, not one of whom died before his seventieth birthday, and many of whom neared, while some passed, their eightieth—the perpetual youth, I say, of such "old" men comes nearer to a proof of human immortality than any of the data collected by the Psychical Research Society. And I may surely add W. D. Howells to the list.

That the greatest work of such men has usually been done in their old age I will not contend, though I wish to particularize more in regard to that presently, and generally, as far as my space permits, examine particular examples. I consider it easy to maintain that, whatever form of literary masterpiece it is one values, it will be found that on an average it has been produced by men nearer their fiftieth than their fortieth year, and that the immense amount of work which, as the phrase is, "the world would not"—and could not, without untold spiritual loss—"let die," produced by so-called "old" men, is such as in its superstitious worship of "youth" it never dreams of.

Though great lyric poetry has been written by the young, the cases in which great novels or dramas or the great architectural poems or the great works of philosophy, humor, or history, necessitating the imaginative grasp and understanding of experience, and filled with "the still, sad music of humanity," have been written by any man or woman till well after their fortieth year are so exceptional as merely to prove the rule that the literary masterpiece—with occasional exceptions in lyric poetry—is usually the work of well-advanced maturity.

THE FREAKISHNESS OF FAME

Before taking a few examples at random from the world's classics in support of my generalization, I may, in parenthesis, remark on the curious freakishness which has sometimes seemed to preside over the world's selection among the various great works of one man. It has not infrequently happened that one book in a writer's record wins a fame which makes us forget others hardly less worthy, even sometimes more worthy, of remembrance, and eclipses by its occasionally chance immortality a uniform excellence of productiveness more really significant.

Take, for example, the long life of Ibsen, marked through its whole length with the production of plays, each one of which set Europe thinking. Yet because the earliest impact of his originality upon a startled public opinion was made by "Ghosts" and "A Doll's House" (that even not having been written till he was fifty-one), less attention is paid to "When We Dead Awaken," written in his seventy-seventh year—a play which, coming from one whose career had been a somewhat cynical denial of the emotions, was a swan-song of perhaps even greater importance than Goethe's second part of "Faust," published in his eightieth year, and proclaiming in a far nobler fashion the all importance of love as the last word of human wisdom. For any old man of eighty so to conclude the whole matter would be indeed a portent of great significance, but for Ibsen to do so was a document in optimism the value of which can hardly be overestimated.

To take one or two other random instances of the partiality of fame: De Quincey was an excellent writer till he laid down his pen at seventy-four, yet we only hear of his "Confessions of an Opium-Eater," written when he was thirty-six; as we forget that Izaak Walton wrote one of the best of his incomparable "Lives," that of Bishop Sanderson, when he was close on ninety, because he wrote "The Complete Angler" so many years before. Similarly, to return to our own times, for a thousand that know Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," scarce one has heard of his incomparably greater "The Return of the Native"; and, again, Meredith, in his last years, wrote novels and poems of greater philosophic importance to humanity than the earlier books by which he is better known, as William Morris is known for his "Earthly Paradise" and hardly at all for the infinitely finer prose romances written in the splendid sunset of his life.

But this only by way of illustrating a side issue involved in my theme, that of the popular confusion in some cases of a man's most notorious work with his best, or, at all events, the frequent unfair prominence given to it at the expense of work of no less value. And, in some cases, where a man's work through his lifetime is of continuous original excellence, even a careful critic may be at a loss which to pronounce his positive "best." Did Heine, for example, do his best work when in his brilliant youth he was mocking God, or when, on his tragic deathbed, he was, with the same terrible wit, making his peace with Him?

However, let us waive these important but secondary considerations, and taking a few of the great names of literature apply, so to say, to their genius the reagents of a few dates.

A NOTEWORTHY LIST

To begin, as is customary, with the poets, and taking but a few of the greatest: for Homer, the greatest of all, we have nothing but tradition, but that, as no one needs be told, makes him a very old man, the type of the white-bearded ancient bard. (That he was a real man, and not a sort of bardic "syndicate" is, I believe, more and more agreed among scholars.) The three great dramatic poets of Greece, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, were all marvelous old men of whose triumphant creativeness from a laureled youth to an age equally laureled we possess but wonderful fragments.

Æschylus, says tradition, had seventy plays to his credit, of which we have, alas, but seven. Of the great Latin poets, if Vergil died comparatively young, a poet whose output is perhaps closer to the common heart of mankind, Horace, went on polishing his verse into immortality into a comfortable age, verse that no young man could ever write. Though Dante's youth gave us the exquisite almond blossom of the " Vita Nuova," it took him all his grim remaining years, till his death at fifty-six, to plant for us the cypress-groves of the " Inferno," and Petrarch was still singing of Laura at seventy. Ronsard, writing his first famous odes at twenty-six, sang still more unforgetably just before his death at sixty-one.

Chaucer's " Canterbury Tales " were the work of a man of fifty. Spenser's " Faerie Queene " was written between his fortieth and forty-fourth year. Some of Shakespeare's plays — " Hamlet," " Macbeth," " Othello," and " King Lear," were written between his thirty-sixth and forty-fourth years, but " The Tempest," surely no less full of his aery magic, remained to be written by the man of fifty. Milton, of course, would still have been a supreme lyric poet had he died after writing " Lycidas," yet the world had naturally to wait for his " Paradise Lost " till his fifty-ninth year—for such poems come only out of that winepress of bitter sorrow and tragic vision which the young, in spite of all their musical elegiacs, have not had time to tread.

Pope—though he, as Mrs. Browning said of him, was " sexagenary at sixteen "—did not write his " Essay on Man " till he was forty-six. Wordsworth's most entertaining period was, undoubtedly, in the early years of the " Lyrical Ballads," yet the true Wordsworthian, in spite of Byron's famous witticism, does not find his " Excursion " (written at forty-four) half as " dreary " and " weary " as the majority of his lordship's own poems, and knows where to find poetry, in spite of his longwindedness, in all he wrote even up to his eightieth year.

Coleridge, that great and magical poet, belongs to that class of genius whose best work being done in youth or early manhood is really nothing to the point, inasmuch as they either robbed their maturity of effectiveness by wilfully destroying their faculties by various forms of dissipation, or were cut off—like that " Apollo's branch " of Marlowe, that " might have grown full straight "—by early death. Of the latter, such poets as Byron, Burns, Shelley, and Keats, there is no reason at all to suppose that they had reached their zenith. Had they lived they would probably have produced still greater poetry and swelled the ranks of their illustrious elders. Yet, in spite of all the ravages of opium, Coleridge was able in his later years to give to philosophy what was lost to poetry, and if another " Ancient Mariner " or " Kubla Khan " was beyond his power, he gave us his " Aids to Reflection " at fifty-two, and through his reported talk till his death at sixty-two, has remained one of the most subtly influential of modern minds.

Of other poets that the world most easily thinks of, Tennyson and Browning have already been referred to, as also the immortal old age of Goethe. To these may be added the cheering records of Béranger, seventy-seven, and Longfellow, seventy-five, both full of song till the end, the two poets, with the single exception of Burns, whose poems are vitally in the hearts and on the lips of that wide world of simple workers which one still sometimes hears referred to as " the common people." The wonderful youth that produced his " Thanatopsis " at nineteen was surely matched by that continued literary activity of Bryant which did not cease till his death at eighty-four. Tom Hood died at fifty-six, but it was, one might say, with " The Bridge of Sighs " and the " Song of the Shirt " upon his lips—two poems that may be called poems of humanity if any poems can.

ECHOES FROM THE SURGE OF HUMAN LIVES

But I fear I may seem to have attached too much importance to poets at the expense of other masters of literature; though, if I have so done, the fault is rather the world's than mine, which, for some mysterious reason, ranks its poets so high that, according to Carlyle, England would rather give up its India than its Shakespeare.

When one turns from the poets to the great prose-writers of the world, to the great philosophers, historians, novelists, dramatists, humorists, satirists, essayists, Dr. Osler's man past forty has the field so much to himself that, without turning this article into a library catalogue, it is almost impossible to make any adequate survey. Even great poetry may be written by intuition, by the dream faculty which all poets more or less possess, but the terrible, serene books of philosophy, the majestic, calm-eyed histories, the great, broken-hearted tragedies and comedies, the wistful human romances filled with the sound of the surge of human lives, the books of huge and kindly laughter, the scourging, purifying satires can only be written from close observation of men and women and much going to and fro on one's own feet upon the earth.

The " Dialogues " of Plato, the " Novum Organum " of Bacon, Kant's " Critique of Pure Reason " could not have been created by the most precocious of young men. The histories of Tacitus, Gibbon, Grote and Carlyle, Prescott and Parkman are equally beyond the reach of youth. No young man ever wrote a tragedy like " The Agamemnon " or a comedy like " La Malade Imaginaire." It was not youth that gave us the " Gargantua " of Rabelais or the essays of Montaigne, nor did " Don Quixote " spring from the insouciant fancy of inexperience. Victor Hugo was sixty when he wrote perhaps the world's greatest novel, " Les Misérables." Balzac died at sixty-one, still at work on the great unfinished cathedral of " The Human Comedy "; and, comparatively young as were the men who gave us " Tom Jones," " The Waverley Novels," " David Copperfield," and " Vanity Fair," they had all arrived at that period when one's dreams are put to the test of time.

Thus I hold it to be true that the bulk of historical evidence is to the effect that the most humanly important work in literature has been done by men toward the end rather than the beginning of their natural lives, and in many cases right up to the close of unusually long lives, and I venture to think that the cause may be in the truth that youth is a spiritual, elemental principle rather than a mere chronological fact, and that those great purposes which animate all great literature, as they animate all great action, have in them the sap and energy of perpetual youth.

Great purposes make great writers as they make all great men. All great work reaches out beyond the workman and is less for the moment than for the future toward which all human effort is subconsciously striving. It is the breath of the future that makes all great work of any kind alive. Those who deal with dead things, are absorbed in lifeless material preoccupations, soon grow old and die with the things they touch, but those whose business is with the immortal interests of humanity, whose hands work unceasingly for them, themselves become " immortal."

" To grow old in heaven," said Swedenborg, " is to grow young "—which is merely a symbolic way of expressing what one might call the optimistic energy of the universe to which so-called "age " is merely a garment its infinitely expansive youth is eternally outgrowing.

THE LAST PORT

(Old Marblehead Cemetery)

Here sleep the silent captains by their sea.
The shrill northeaster warns them not; their eyes
No longer scan the ghostly fogs that rise
In silent, swirling menace on their lee.
The polar star they can no longer see;
The ancient, salt-encrusted town that lies
Below their hill, means naught to them, grown wise
In the vast outlook of eternity.
No watch they set; the sparrow builds her nest
Unheeded; nothing stirs within their breast
At call of waterfowl or drone of bee;
And here are other graves amid the rest,
Each with a headstone for the absent guest
Graved with its terse inscription, " Lost at sea."

John D. Swain

THE VICTIM OF A PERFECT SYSTEM

BY TOM MASSON

"MY dear madam," said the doctor, "what your husband needs is a flirtation with some silly young girl."

Mrs. Maltby, at first inclined to sudden rage, sank back and stared at him blankly.

"What do you mean?" she gasped at last.

"It's a new idea of mine—founded upon a basic principle of human nature. I find that the suggestion of it always startles, and not infrequently estranges me from my patient. But I've advised it in a number of cases, and it usually works admirably. Besides—" The good doctor lowered his voice. "It's inevitable!"

"What's inevitable?" snapped Mrs. Maltby.

That lady was very much put out. Her vanity had been greatly agitated; and in the doctor's whole manner there was a subtle criticism implied, of her and of her hold over her husband. He might almost have added: "You are an old woman. You no longer interest him." This, naturally, was intensely disagreeable; especially when Mrs. Maltby reflected that she wasn't really old; she was, indeed, in that happy period known (especially by those who are in it) as the "prime of life."

The doctor knew what she was thinking. He had had experience. He did not falter.

"It's inevitable," he continued, "that your husband will do these things, anyway. Why not save his character and restore him to health by having no secrets? Wait a moment, madam; don't be angry. Mr. Maltby has reached a time where his nerves, having gone back on him because of excessive work—in your behalf, madam—he is entitled to recreation. Most men in this condition are apt to flirt secretly. Let him do this with your knowledge. Then there will be nothing to regret. He will be glad—overjoyed—to get back home. Remember, if you want him restored to you permanently, this is the only way. It is drastic, but it works."

"Where is the girl?" asked Mrs. Maltby, somewhat cynically.

"I'll supply the girl. This, as I have explained to you, is an entirely new idea in medical science. I am doing it right along, and restoring many husbands to their wives in perfect health. Your husband goes to a resort. He meets the girl there. He falls desperately in love with her — temporarily, you understand. He forgets all about himself. Suddenly the girl throws him over; he realizes his perfidy to you and returns home, sadder and wiser and more in love with you than ever. Will you trust me and save him?"

"Well, he certainly isn't any use now to anybody. Yes, doctor; I will. Go ahead and do your best."

"Very well," said the doctor, consulting a pad. "Suppose we say Blue Springs?"

Two days later Maltby, after much maneuvering on the part of his wife, was on his way to Blue Springs. Mrs. Maltby, according to instructions, but with many inward misgivings, insisted upon his going alone.

And Maltby went; outwardly sorry, but secretly exultant. It had been many years since he had been away from his wife, and he was correspondingly elated. He experienced genuine sensations of freedom.

Nobody but a woman of Mrs. Maltby's sublime courage and temperament could have waited for the next three weeks. But she stuck it out. And at last, one day she was rewarded by an advance telegram. Two hours later, toward evening, the door opened and her husband entered. A glance showed that he was restored to health, but—

"Tell me everything, Henry," she said quietly a little later, as she faced him with determined aspect. Her time had come.

Maltby turned pale. Under her keen eye he was beginning to feel a return of the embarrassment he had experienced when they first met. The interim had restored his balance somewhat, but now—

"Everything!" he faltered. "I don't understand you."

"Yes, everything. I practically know it all, anyway. How was the girl? And how did she treat you? I know everything, never fear, only you might as well make a clean breast of it."

"Girl! But I—" stammered Maltby.

"Yes. She turned you down, didn't she?" In spite of herself, Mrs. Maltby could scarcely conceal at this point a shade of anxiety. But her confidence in the doctor and in his treatment was unwavering.

Maltby groaned.

"Yes," he repeated, "she turned me down. I can tell you, dear, it has taught me a good lesson. An old chap like me ought to have known better, anyway. Never was so glad to get home in my life. If I had only gone to Blue Springs, as you said, it wouldn't have happened."

"Didn't you go to Blue Springs?" exclaimed Mrs. Maltby.

"Oh, no. On the way South I ran up against Chipperton, an old friend. He persuaded me not to go to Blue Springs, so I changed my ticket and went to Pine Summit. Delightful place. Hadn't been there a day before I met a charming young girl. I was completely carried away by her appearance. Of course, dear, underneath it all I loved you just the same."

"Oh, of course," murmured Mrs. Maltby, now utterly dumfounded.

"And she was so nice and pleasant," continued her husband, "I didn't know what a fool I was. After I had spent about — well, quite a sum of money on her — she turned me down completely — almost laughed in my face—said she heard I was a married man—Chipperton guyed the life out of me. And here I am back, loving you more than ever."

He threw his arms around her impulsively.

"Forgive me!" he cried; "I knew I couldn't conceal it from you, and so I have made a clean breast of it, but you may be sure of one thing. I've had my lesson. I'll never leave your side again as long as I live."

"Not if I know it," whispered Mrs. Maltby. "And you didn't go to Blue Springs?"

She could not rest until she had interviewed the doctor. The next day she burst into his office.

"You said Blue Springs!" she exclaimed; "but my husband didn't go there. He switched off with a friend and went somewhere else. In the mean time, where was the girl you had there?"

The doctor smiled.

"Madam," he replied, "I had no girl at Blue Springs. Your husband is cured, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, I didn't have to have a girl at Blue Springs or anywhere else. Nature takes care of that. It didn't make any difference with an old married man like your husband where he went. There's always a young girl somewhere waiting; and when she gets through with him he's always glad to get home. Madam, it's a part of my system. It works itself."

PROTEST

The ghost-flower, not the rose, should be the pledge
  Of love like thine, so bloodless and so cold—
  Exactly chilled to type, the perfect mold
Of flawless forms, whereof none may allege
A fault; a pallid goodness to disedge
  The human heart—love wholly self-controlled!
  Oh, for frank passion innocently bold—
The honest girl I kissed beside the hedge
When glowed the gloaming giddy with glad song,
  The lane a dizzy whirl of dancing flowers,
    And all my blood beat joy of June-time's charm!
You love but me? Why, then, your old self wrong
  By new conventions? Oh, for bygone hours,
    The rustic maid whose brown hand was so warm!

Stokely S. Fisher

THE BIGGEST BANK IN THE WORLD

BY JUDSON C. WELLIVER

IN no banking scheme can there be the magic to make gold out of brass. The currency system that was perfect—if perfection could rest in human invention—would not convert thistles into roses. But currency systems that are faulty can grow weeds where they ought to grow grass.

The new banking and currency measure will never make successful men out of men born to be unsuccessful. It may make the path of success smoother; it may make less bitter the lamentation of failure.

We shall KNOW the merits or defects of the new system when we have tried it out, not before. One thing is sure—this country has set up the biggest banking engine the world has ever seen.

When its organization is perfected and the thousands of banking units scattered all over the land are brought together in this colossal financial unification of the nation, we shall have a banking power that will far exceed—in capital, in resources, in the stock of gold—the Bank of England or the Bank of France or the Imperial Bank of Germany or the Bank of Russia.

More: When our new system is in full operation it seems sure to command a capitalization well-nigh equaling the aggregate capital of all four of the greatest national banks of the world.

It is difficult to grasp the figures which represent the dimensions, the outreachings, the ingatherings of this stupendous establishment.

It is the purpose of the new law to effect a unification and consolidation, in cooperating and harmonious effort, of the banking resources of the nation as represented by the national banks, the State banks, and the trust companies.

Not all the banks and trust companies organized under State laws are yet free to join the Federal reserve system. In some of the States such institutions are chartered under statutes which make it impossible for them to subscribe for stock in the regional banks or to operate under the new regulations until the State laws have been changed. There is little doubt that every State will confer the necessary authority. Then it will be possible to have a nearly complete unity—as if it were a Bank of the United States.

It is true that neither in the terms of the law nor in those of fact shall we refer to the new institution as the Bank of the United States. Instead, it will be a chain of Regional Reserve Banks, fixed at important financial centers, each bringing together the fiscal fabric of its region into a unity, all of them under the supervision and general control of the Federal Reserve Board at Washington. This Reserve Board is the grip of government which holds the whole together and makes it a cooperating system; a single vast reservoir of the nation's banking strength and reserves, through which the tides of credit will flow under the influence of the national economic laws as the tides of the five oceans flow under the action of the natural forces that govern them.

Unless politics perverts its purpose and prostitutes its being, effort will be made, in the administration of the new law, to win recognition of this system as one magnificent unity. For its full success it is imperative that this shall be so recognized abroad, where the attitude toward the new system will largely depend upon this consummation.

With the national and State banks and trust companies crowding in their applications for affiliation by hundreds a day, as at the time of this writing, the Treasury authorities calculate that within two or three years the new Bank of the United

States will have a total paid-up capital of about $200,000,000. That sum will represent six per cent of the combined capital and surplus of all the banks affiliated with the new system.

Back of this gigantic institution will stand the banking resources of the richest country in the world, aggregating about twenty billions of dollars.

The new establishment will represent a gold stock of approximately one billion four hundred millions of dollars. This is something like eighty per cent of the combined gold holdings of the Bank of England, the Bank of France, the Imperial German Bank, and the Bank of Russia.

A casual analysis of these tremendous figures makes them yet more impressive. Turn first to the world's vast stocks of gold for which all great countries are constant competitors. It is vital to their business and financial security. Let us see what the relative strength of the United States will be in this field.

In round figures, the gold holdings of the four greatest national institutions, from recent reports, are:

Gold stock in the United States Treasury	$1,297,000,000
Additional gold in banks affiliated with the new system, estimated	200,000,000
Total	$1,497,000,000
Bank of France	$704,160,800
Bank of England	209,643,260
Bank of Russia	755,000,000
Imperial German Bank	294,000,000
Total gold stocks of the four greatest European banks	$1,962,804,060

The nations are constantly engaged in a struggle to make their financial systems firm by accumulating the needed stocks in gold, and by adopting such financial systems as will enable them to retain that gold, and also to utilize it most effectively in the conduct of their business and the maintenance of their international financial status.

For years the United States has held the greatest gold store, but the one least available for ready and effective use. Under the new banking system the credit of that vast store of gold which lies inert in the vaults under the Treasury Building in Washington will have the breath of life breathed into it; it will be made available as never before, like the mobile reserves of an army, to be shifted hither and yon, to reenforce the weak positions, and to make the national fiscal position strong and constantly stronger.

This is the prime purpose and the cardinal virtue of the new system—to send gold-secured currency from sections where it is not employed to sections where employment awaits it, exactly like the men moved from the harvested fields to fields where the crops stand ripened but untouched, their golden glory ready to go to waste merely for want of hands to gather the treasure.

With the unification of national and State deposits what will be the new system's probable capital and resources? Here are authentic figures in detail on the capital, surplus, and resources of the three classes of banks admitted to the new system:

	Cap. and Surp.	Resources.
National	$1,781,000,000	$10,876,000,000
State	679,000,000	4,000,000,000
Trust comp's.	897,000,000	5,000,000,000
Totals	$3,357,000,000	$19,876,000,000

The nominal capitalization of the new Bank of the United States—that is, the aggregation of regional banks under the Reserve Board—will be six per cent, then, of $3,357,000,000, or a little more than $200,000,000.

Back of that capitalization, as said, will stand the twenty billions of resources of the whole system. What is implied, in the creation of a national banking establishment, with two hundred millions of capital and twenty billions of resources, may be judged by comparisons with the capitalizations of the four great national banking institutions named before:

	Capital and Surplus.
Bank of England	$87,500,000
Bank of Russia	27,500,000
Bank of France	41,500,000
Bank of Germany	61,500,000
Total	$218,000,000

Further figures might be presented to indicate the incomparable power of the new American engine of finance. There seems to be no need, however, to dwell upon the contrast. It is altogether within the possibilities that before the end of its first decade the new American creation will, in capital, in resources, in general fiscal capacity, equal the national banking establishments of all Europe!

A DEFENSE OF SPINSTERS

BY ANOTHER OF THEM

In the January MUNSEY we published an article entitled "The Plaint of a Spinster," by One of Them. This article presents the views of another bachelor woman on the same subject—spinsters and marriage. The divergent views of these two writers doubtless reflect their respective temperaments. The January article has awakened a wide interest and brought us a flood of letters. Further discussions on the subject will appear in this magazine.—*The Editor.*

HAVING written up the "High Cost of Living," "What is the Matter With the Churches?" and "How Did the Rich Become So?" the magazine-writer has taken Us up. Whether we feel grateful or not depends on the particular magazine we happen to be reading at the moment, with more or less feverish interest in the subject-matter of the article.

One leaves you with the impression that there is nothing for us to do but crawl off into a corner and dine on a few mercury tablets at the earliest possible moment. Another flatters us with remarks anent our acknowledged cleverness and our usefulness to the world in general. Of them all—and we have enjoyed every one, I believe—the plaint in the January MUNSEY was the most wailing. We almost felt ourselves injured as we read.

From my earliest days I have planned for six children, named respectively John, Mary, Robert, Launcelot, Elizabeth, and Donald. The preponderance of boys may be noted. I should never have chosen a girl at all had I not been devoted to my mother, who likes girls, and I thought it safer to have two girls in order to be sure of one in case scarlet fever should carry off the other. I sometimes wondered whether it might not be better to have eight children in order to have more boys, and I then chose, as names for consideration, Galahad and George, twins. These children have never been named, so the names are as good as new and any one may borrow them.

Blessed with a houseful of brothers and sundry boy cousins, living next door, I was nine years of age before I had a girl friend. From those days to these boys, big and small, have liked me and shown it. The friendliness I have always reciprocated, but I have never met the man I should choose for myself in any walk in life.

My friends' husbands are pleasant men, self-satisfied, complacent, but absolutely lacking in the little lilt of fun, the give-and-take of daily life, that make the joys of each day. Stolid to the point of stupidity, most of them—only one having a thought outside of his profession and its interests. Would one marry a machine just for the sake of writing an annex to her name?

Children, I grant you, are worth all sacrifices—my heart tells me that when I hold my friends' children on my lap and wish, secretly, that they were mine, with that heartache we all know. Being a genealogical faddist, I should like to hand down some of my cranky notions to my own children—hoping they would not inherit my long and narrow nose—but when I shall reach the age of forty (I am not there yet) I hope to have the means to adopt a boy or so and make up for my lack.

Possibly it will be more enjoyable, not having any responsibility regarding the inheritance of obvious faults of my own. It may be counted as more righteous to bring up in the way they should go those who are bereft than those who have all. Meanwhile it is rather entertaining to act as fairy godmother to sundry nieces and nephews who look eagerly for one's coming.

Planning thus, it is easy to see that I was brought up with the idea that I should marry " one of these days." The difference between the lady in the January issue and myself lies probably in the fact that I am a philosopher or, in more modern parlance, " a good sport." If it is more expedient, for any reason, that you should have a glass of milk than the moon, why, my child, do you distort your face crying for the moon? If you are going to be an " old maid " (excuse me) why not be the very nicest kind of a one?

You say men do not like old maids. Well, I don't think I should like your kind either. Men like me. I should not waste any time worrying about it if they didn't. I am too busy. Aren't there a million things to do every day?

Our friend of the January number has sat her down to weep because she has no husband. Apparently any man of any sort would do her. What chance would she have of weeping less after marriage if she feels thus? From the age of six I have had offers of marriage and have nipped in the bud other incipient proposals, and yet, I repeat, I have never seen the man with whom I could imagine I might be happy.

Twice I have thought seriously of it, and once I was engaged for six weeks. I was not overcritical. One man was selfish and sensual, the other cold and stingy, and either would have ruined my happiness.

I am far from pretty, being often, in bad moments, fairly homely, but admiration follows me at a respectful distance on cars, in stores, on the train, everywhere the second glance proves me attractive—which I can confess to realizing under my anonymity. Analyzing it in the face of my obvious plainness, I have decided that it is because I am happy.

Among the sour-looking, frowning, disgruntled crowds I preserve a real, sincere happiness, and people like it. Dogs wag their tails, men give me a seat in the car, women smile, and children talk—because I am happy, really happy.

Our friend says coarse women always marry, but she says nothing about their husbands. A coarse woman's husband is at heart coarse, a man who will seek affinities, drink, or gamble, and small loss if we don't marry him. By the same token we cast in the discard the man who is caught by the overdressed or the loud girl. Occasionally a man is so blind that he, a " nice " fellow, is tricked into believing such a woman real, but not often. Anyhow, we aren't any of us perfect, even we spinsters, you know, and the man may be very happy with the coarse woman at whom we raise our lorgnette so disdainfully.

A PANACEA FOR THE SPINSTER

If there is no tragedy like that of the woman who wants a home and has none, let us up and make one. Even in the country — which our friend considers a weary waste—one can get a cottage and a few orphans, big or little. Did our friend live in the city she might see many a ragged babe for whom, though she herself be poor, she could do so much more than the child will ever have as things are now. A crust shared with a little one like that is better than plum-pudding at a boarding-house. Isn't it?

To live " with futile, unemployed hands and brains " is a crime to-day. Better turn back to the customs of one's ancestors and make butter and spin than permit such a catastrophe to occur. Idle! To-day?

Of course we all think we should make better mothers than the real ones—we have never tried it. If you have ever been left alone with your sister's children for a few days you realize you would have a good deal to learn if the children were yours. In the mere matter of patience we fall flat at once. It is easy to be patient and entertaining for an hour or so, but suppose you had years of it? Think you you would be more gentle than Seraphina, your sister? I doubt it myself, having been sorely tempted to the breaking-point too often to be overcritical.

Unmarried women who are ciphers have only themselves to blame now and always. I have in mind a great-aunt who taught a family of nine children whose gratitude to her to-day stands as a monument to her memory. She was a woman of such character that her ideas and opinions are still discussed in our household, thirty years after her death. I recall also the remark of a clergyman in New York who told me that his Aunt Cornelia influenced him and his brothers far more than did their mother. They have her portrait in their home, and in the history of the New England town, written by a stranger, there is a page devoted to the woman who left her mark on the village and its people in a thousand different ways.

A niece named for her is growing into a charming young woman, but they smile wistfully when they tell me "she can never equal Aunt Cornelia." Not worth while, perhaps.

Married women *are* friends with the unmarried. I know, because I have many married friends. Occasionally we find a married woman who can talk of nothing but the baby's ailments and the behavior of the cook, but in a case like that it is not for the single woman to hide her head. In these days of broad and well-read women there should be something better to discuss as a regular thing. Yet, if a single woman is so narrow that she cannot sympathize when the baby has a sore throat and prescribe when little Susie has a pain, then she is much to blame herself.

Personally, I enjoy the articles on how to feed the baby, and I have a memory that retains such information as I can glean regarding young children. On one occasion I prescribed a diet for an ailing infant that set it on its little legs in a week—a triumph over a doctor who did not know, perhaps, just how densely ignorant the college-graduate mother was. If the unmarried woman shows her intelligence the married woman will find she has to look to her laurels and brush up her knowledge to avoid being left behind as a shriveled relic of the old days.

I, too, have known widowers with grown children who have married women just out of the nursery, but the point of it is that I had no "hankering" for the widower. If he liked to choose his wife as he would a stick of candy we smiled and granted him the right. "The people people marry are the queerest folks of all," but it might be that others would smile when you choose your life partner, so we have no right to throw stones, have we?

There is no excuse for being lonely, there is less for being idle, there is least for blaming others for our state of single blessedness. Being brought up to look after a home hasn't hurt us any, has it? Personally I am glad I know how to cook, thankful I can sew, rejoiced that I could care for a baby. Who knows when or how I may need the knowledge and training? Suppose your mother, my friend, had brought you up to know none of her trade and you had married—what then?

Finally, to train women to "catch" men, as our January friend suggests, would catch what kind of men? What chance of happiness would one have with a man who, caught by your philandering, would be as easily diverted after marriage? Do you honestly like that kind of a man? My standard is higher because my brothers and cousins are *men*—not to mention my father.

If one would listen to the birds and the children (even though they belong to others), to brooks and music, to the stars, the clouds, the trees, and the poor, one would not have time to hear "the slow drip from her broken heart as she waits (note that) for the years to pass"—I haven't.

What is there for us? Faith in God, hope in ourselves, charity for others, joy in everything!

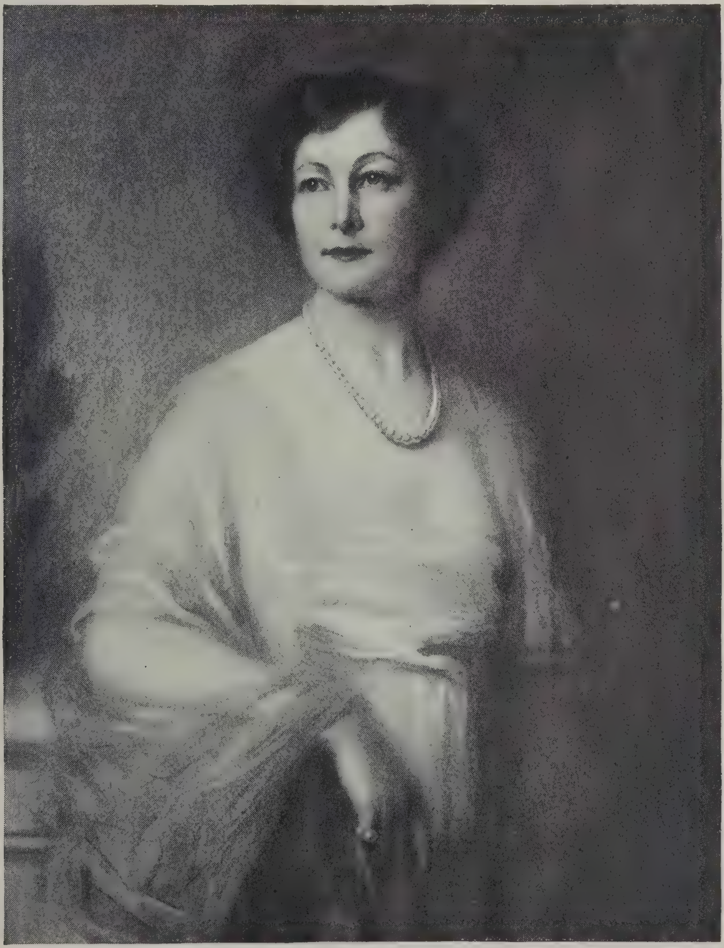
A HERALD OF SPRING

The bright yellow jonquils are blooming again,
All brimful of fragrance, so come let us drain
Their green and gold goblets, and joyfully sing,
While sipping their nectar, a welcome to spring!
In each golden chalice fond memories dwell,
And each shining petal has something to tell
Of old-fashioned gardens, where grandmother's beds
Taught early spring jonquils to hold up their heads.
Undaunted by March winds, that bluster and blow,
They smile and look up, as they swing to and fro;
For down in the depth of each glittering cup
Are the smiles of the spring-time of years garnered up.

Sophie E. Morgan

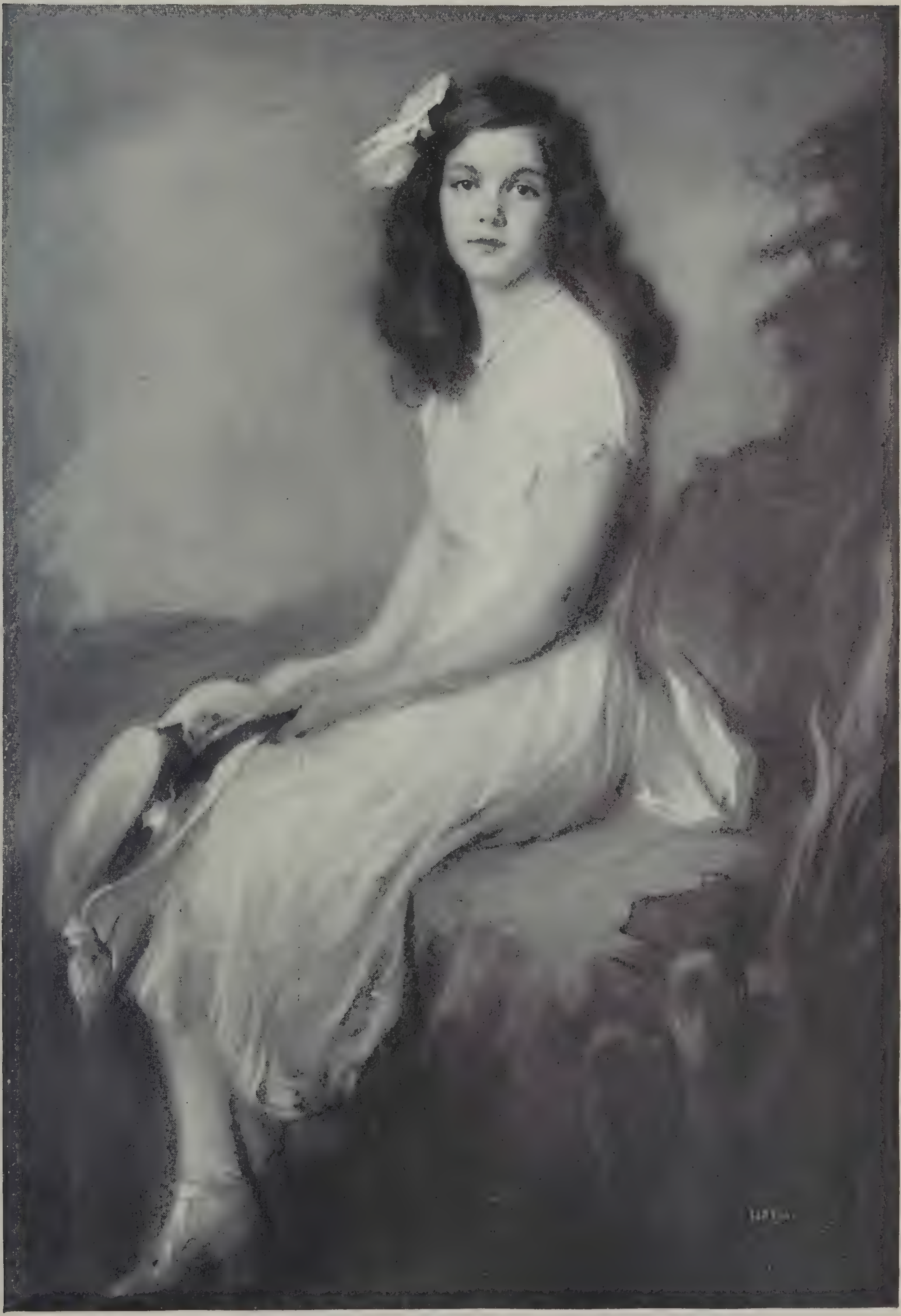
SOME GOOD EXAMPLES OF HALMI'S PORTRAITURE

Every season brings over from Europe its portrait-painters. Some of them establish a permanent following and come many times, others have a short run. The new man, if he has good luck, makes his American début with an exhibition of portraits of handsome American women of social prestige. Arthur Louis Halmi, a Hungarian artist, has had this good luck and has given us some graceful examples of his art. We present, herewith, a few of them.



MRS. SHERWOOD ALDRICH, A MEMBER OF THE GLEN COVE, LONG ISLAND, COLONY OF NEW YORK SOCIETY

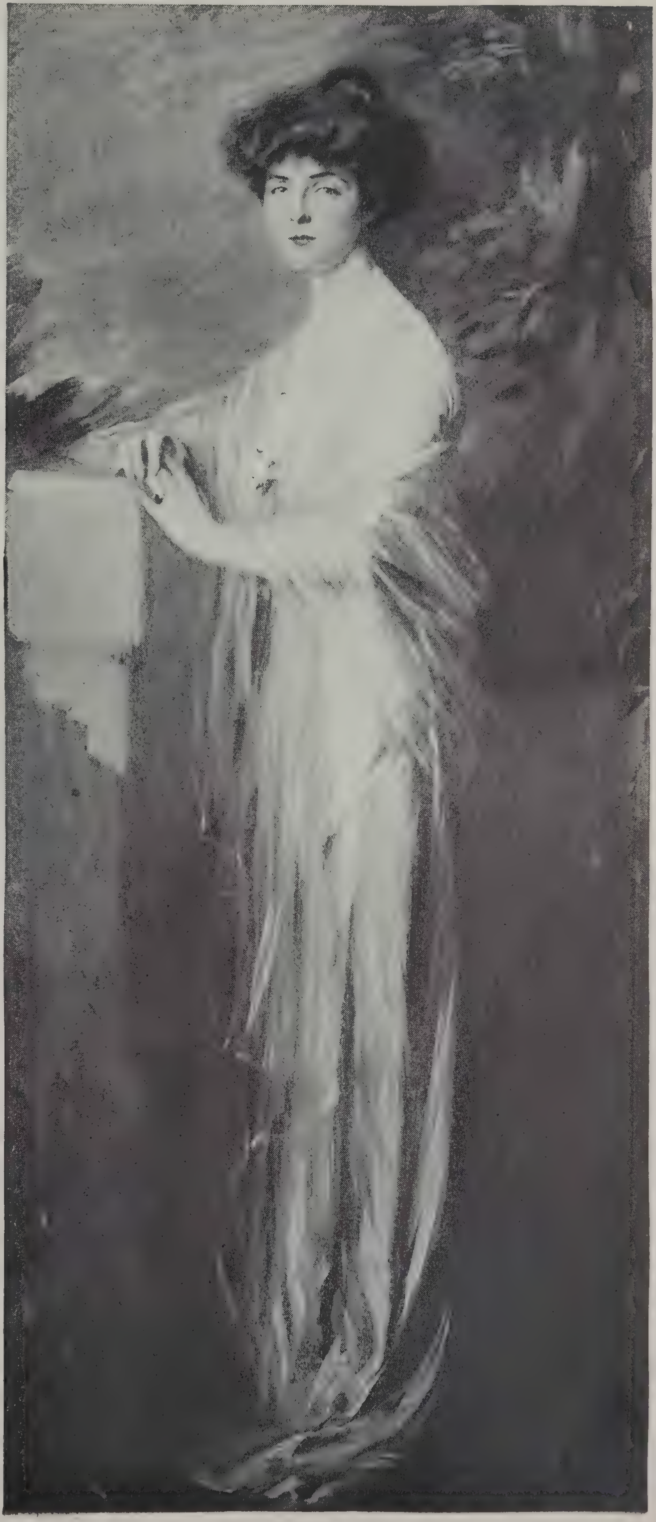
MRS. GEORGE J. GOULD. THIS IS A FINE, SPEAKING LIKENESS OF ONE WHO NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION TO THE READERS OF MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE



MISS EDITH GOULD, THIRD DAUGHTER OF MR. AND MRS. GEORGE J. GOULD

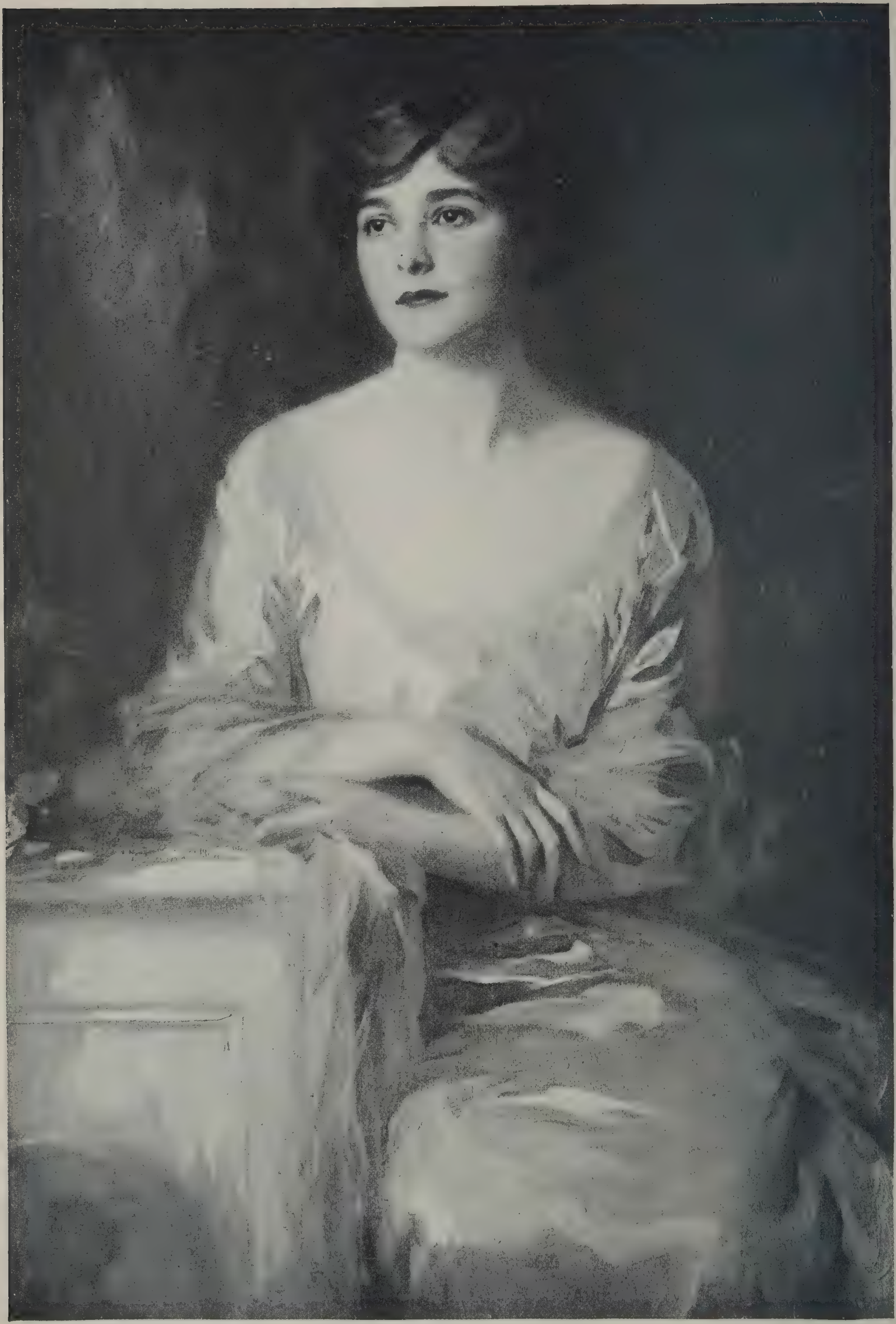
MRS. WILLIAM H. ERHART, OF NEW YORK AND THE LONG ISLAND COLONY AT CEDARHURST. HER MAIDEN NAME WAS MISS E. HENRIETTE GRAVES

MRS. CORNELIUS H. TANGEMAN, OF NEW YORK AND THE LONG ISLAND COLONY. BEFORE HER MARRIAGE SHE WAS MISS VIOLET HARKNESS



MRS. THOMAS SHEVLIN, OF MINNEAPOLIS, WHO SPENDS MUCH TIME IN NEW YORK AND WAS A KENTUCKY BELLE BEFORE HER MARRIAGE

MRS. ANTHONY J. DREXEL, JR., A DAUGHTER OF MR. AND MRS. GEORGE J. GOULD



MRS. WALTER LEWISOHN. SHE WAS MISS SELMA KRAUS, A DAUGHTER OF MR. AND MRS. MAURICE KRAUS

THE MURDER OF WILLIAM BLESSING

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

AUTHOR OF "A PRINCE OF SINNERS," "THE MASTER MUMMER," "CONSPIRATORS," ETC.

BEING THE FOURTH OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF MR. STANLEY BROOKE, THE DELIBERATE DETECTIVE

ILLUSTRATED BY W. B. KING

THE Hon. Stanley Brooke leaned back in his steamer-chair and yawned. A pleasant and bracing west wind blew in his face, the white-topped waves were all aglint with sunshine. His surroundings were altogether delightful. There was, in fact, only one circumstance which made him inclined to regret this suddenly arranged trip across the Atlantic. This was his third day out, and he was bored.

The usual distractions were offered him.

"Care to make a fourth at shuffleboard, sir?" a bareheaded young man asked, pausing tentatively before his chair and brandishing a fearful looking implement with a scooped-out end.

Brooke shook his head.

"I'm not very keen on deck games," he confessed; "thanks all the same."

A head was thrust out from the smoking-room window. Its owner caught Brooke's eye.

"Will you come and make us up at bridge?" one of his table companions asked.

Brooke refused even more decidedly.

"I never play cards until after dinner," he declared.

He was left alone presently and fell to studying the people as they passed. He was beginning to realize that lately all other interests in life had become with him subordinate to this.

He appreciated the elasticity of one's powers of observation when properly ministered to, the possibility of tragedy and crime beneath the smoothest and most commonplace exterior. He had developed a habit of watchfulness. The lines about his mouth had tightened.

It was more of an effort with him now to assume that bland aspect of juvenile imbecility which had stood him more than once in such good stead. Yet it certainly seemed that upon this voyage there was little enough to engage his interest.

The boat was a medium-sized one and not one of the fastest. The people were mostly Americans of the tourist type, a handful of business men — and Gordon Black. Brooke, whenever he tried to think of any one of them, found himself always thinking of Black.

The man passed as he sat there—tall, hard-featured, his hands clasped behind him, his eyes bent upon the deck. The invalid who lay flat in a chair by Brooke's side stretched out a hand and touched his neighbor on the coat-sleeve.

"Tell me," he asked in a quavering voice, "is that really Mr. Gordon Black?"

"That is his name," Brooke replied. "He looks rather an interesting character. Do you know anything about him?"

The little man looked at his questioner wonderingly. He was a small, frail person, with white hair and wasted face, and there were rumors that he was dying. He had been carried on board at Southampton, and he only appeared on deck for an hour at a time.

" Know anything about Gordon Black!" he repeated. " Why, a year or two ago he was the most talked-of man in the States!"

" Why?" Brooke asked. " Is he a celebrity, then?"

The little man—he called himself Dr. Browning, but admitted that he was only a dentist—sighed.

" Of course, you're English," he remarked, " and you wouldn't read our papers. Gordon Black was the head of a great railroad trust. He ran up against another trust, controlled by Seth Pryor, and they had the greatest financial struggle that the history of American finance has ever known.

" In the end, Black was maneuvered into a false position. He broke the law and had to leave the country. It has always been understood that there was some sort of an agreement between him and his enemies that, if he left, his followers should be spared. That's the idea, at any rate.

" Anyway, during the last two months Seth Pryor has suddenly begun to squeeze Black's followers. Black is on his way back to fight him, and Seth Pryor has sworn that as soon as he sets foot in New York he'll have him arrested."

" It sounds interesting," Brooke confessed.

" It is interesting," the other declared. " It's a romance, sir—a wonderful romance. I have never spoken to Mr. Gordon Black myself, but he is going back to face the music because he thinks it his duty, and for my part I hope he pulls through."

He leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes with the air of one fatigued by conversation. Brooke took up his book and set it down again. Afterward he decided that it must have been some mesmeric instinct which prompted him at that precise moment to struggle up from his comfortable seat, throw aside his rug, and stroll along the deck.

On his second time around he came to an abrupt standstill at the aft extremity of the promenade-deck. A few yards away from him, but in the second-class portion of the ship, a girl, whose profile was turned toward him, was leaning over the rail, bending far forward with folded arms, in an attitude which seemed to him somehow familiar.

He stood perfectly still, watching her, and then a curious thing happened. The thrill was doubtless caused by the recollection of those few breathless moments of life and death through which they two had lived together, but it is certain that Brooke felt suddenly the rush of warm blood through his veins and the singing of strange things around his heart.

Without a moment's hesitation he crossed the narrow plankway and stepped to her side.

" Miss Robinson!" he exclaimed eagerly. " It really is you, then!"

She turned and looked at him. She was a little startled. Taken so completely by surprise, she seemed to forget for the moment her somewhat uncompromising attitude. Her beautiful eyes were lit with something very like pleasure, her lips parted into almost tender lines. The moment was a revelation. For the first time Brooke realized that she was beautiful.

" It really is you, then," she murmured.

" But what on earth—" he began. " I thought you were going to a post in the country."

Already her manner was stiffening. A touch of the old sullenness was in her tone. She had been taken by surprise.

" A new country," she corrected him. " I am tired of England."

" You are going to America for good?"

" Precisely," she replied. " I am an emigrant."

" I think that you might have told me," he protested.

She was already in revolt.

" And why?" she demanded. " I have already accepted charity from you. I have lived for twenty-four years in England, twelve of which have been blankly miserable. I am going to start again."

" Are you going to New York?"

" To New York," she assented.

" You have a position?"

She hesitated. She answered him grudgingly.

" I have a place," she admitted. " Forgive me, but you must go now. First-class passengers are not allowed here."

" I wonder," he said deliberately, " why you treat me as though I wanted to pick your pocket. I want to be your friend."

She turned away, her manner reluctantly ungracious.

" It is not possible," she said. " My friendship, anyhow, isn't worth having. Good-by!"

"TELL ME," HE ASKED, "IS THAT REALLY MR. GORDON BLACK?"

She disappeared through the companionway. Brooke retraced his steps slowly to his own deck. As he crossed the bridge he was conscious of being watched. He raised his eyes. Mr. Gordon Black was leaning over the rail, deeply interested now in the uncoiling of a rope below.

II

THAT night, or rather in the small hours of the morning, the silence of the great ship was broken by the sound of hurrying footsteps along the passage outside Brooke's stateroom, a hoarse murmuring of voices, the flying feet of an urgent messenger. Brooke put his head out of the alleyway leading to his cabin.

" Anything the matter?" he asked.

The steward whom he addressed seemed scarcely to hear him. Brooke made his way to the spot where the little group was congregated. Something dark was stretched across the passageway. Brooke looked down upon it with a shudder.

It was the body of a man—a crumpled-up heap, with the head half covered by one distorted arm. His white lips, from which the last groan had issued, were still parted. He could have been dead only a few seconds.

" Did any one see it happen?" Brooke demanded.

No one answered. No one even seemed capable of speech. Brooke turned on another of the electric lights and looked up and down the dimly lit gangway. There was not a soul in sight. The doors of every one of the adjacent staterooms were closed. The place seemed wrapped in gloomy silence; there was nothing to be heard but the thud and roar of the engines below. The only people in sight were the three who stooped over the body—Brooke's own bedroom steward, a bathroom steward, and a boy from the engine-room still carrying a handful of waste.

" Didn't any one see it happen?" Brooke repeated.

The bedroom steward staggered to his feet and shook his head.

" I passed along here not three minutes ago, sir," he declared, " and there wasn't a sign of any one. I just put away some hot-water tins in the closet there. While I was doing it I thought I heard a funny noise. I came back again—and he was lying here. I couldn't have been away altogether more than sixty seconds."

" Do you know who he is?" Brooke inquired.

" He's got the end stateroom a little further along," the bath-room steward declared. " I dunno his name."

Brooke looked steadily down, trying to fix the little scene in his memory. The man was lying on the right-hand side of the gangway and had, therefore, probably been attacked from the left. The blow on his head, too, was on that side. His coat was open and a letter was protruding from it. His right hand lay across his chest, as though he had striven to clutch at something there. There were few other details worth noticing.

Then the captain arrived, followed by the doctor, and presently Brooke retreated to his cabin.

III

A BRUTAL murder committed upon an ocean steamer on the high seas, where the passengers rely for their casual conversation upon an occasional marconigram or fragments of gossip concerning one another, is naturally an absorbing subject of discussion.

From early morning until the bugle sounded for luncheon all games were suspended and all conversation rang the different changes around this most extraordinary and dramatic happening. Brooke threw himself thoroughly into the rôle of careful and attentive listener. Apart from all manner of vague rumors, however, all that was definitely known was trivial.

The man's name was Blessing.

He was of cheerful and sociable disposition, and appeared to have talked to every one on board.

He had never mentioned his profession, but a card in his pocketbook bore the inscription of " Agent," with an address at an office on Broadway.

He had never been seen to quarrel with any one.

The half-torn letter in his pocket was domestic and unimportant.

The staterooms opposite the spot where he had been found were empty with the exception of two, one of which was occupied by a Mr. Baines, who was with the doctor in his room at the time the affair occurred; and the other by Dr. Browning.

Robbery was an impossible motive, as the murdered man had frankly confessed himself short of money, had made application to the purser for a loan, and had despatched a marconigram for a clerk to meet him on the quay with funds.

The cause of death was a blow dealt with some blunt instrument which was not forthcoming.

Brooke listened to the gossip, listened to what every one had to say, and made a few inquiries on his own account. They led him, however, to nothing in the shape of a definite conclusion. Then, a little later, while talking with the captain in his room, the latter handed him a marconigram.

"What do you make of this?" he asked. "It was addressed to Blessing. Under the circumstances, I felt justified in opening it."

Brooke glanced at the flimsy sheet. It consisted only of a few words:

Look out. T is on board.

"Unsigned," he murmured.

"Unfortunately," the captain replied. "If we only knew who sent it, we might know who 'T' was."

"And 'T,'" Brooke added, "might be sitting in irons at this present moment."

"Precisely," the captain agreed dryly. "I don't like these things on my boat. I'm not a detective. I can't detain my passengers. The murderer will probably walk off the gangway at New York and no one will be able to stop him. I may even shake hands with him without knowing it."

"Hard luck!" Brooke declared. "Try one of these."

The captain accepted one of his visitor's cigarettes and parted from him, a few minutes later, without any very exalted opinion of his young friend's intelligence.

Brooke paced slowly down the deck with his hands behind him. As he neared the spot where, on the preceding day, he had seen Constance Robinson, he glanced up. She was leaning against the rail in almost the same position, only this time she had turned a little sidewise. She was facing him, and, as he raised his cap in salutation, she beckoned him to her. He crossed the dividing bridge at once and stood by her side.

"You've heard about the murder, of course?" she asked bruskly.

"Naturally," Brooke admitted.

She looked at him for a moment, a grim smile upon her lips.

"I forgot," she went on. "The solution of crime is rather in your line, isn't it? Solve this one."

"I can't," Brooke confessed.

"Who murdered Mr. Blessing?"

"No idea!"

"And you on the spot!" she exclaimed derisively. "Fancy calling yourself a man of observation!"

Brooke looked at her steadfastly. Without a doubt she was a different person. Her hair, a little disordered in the wind, was unexpectedly luxuriant; her dark, splendid eyes were lit with gentle laughter; the glow of a new health was already stealing into her cheeks. In her plain, tight-fitting, blue serge costume, her entire absence of ornaments, she appealed to him in a subtle and entirely novel way.

"In this instance," he said simply, "I am afraid that I must confess myself a failure. I have made a great many inquiries, but they have led nowhere. Perhaps you can help me?"

She suddenly became grave.

"As it happens," she replied, "I can. Come nearer."

He stood close to her side. A few yards away an Italian squatted, playing a concertina; four men were throwing quoits; a mother was sitting with her three children. Constance glanced around and drew him to the side of the boat.

"Mr. Blessing was murdered by a man named Gordon Black," she told him. "Perhaps, as I can tell you the name of the guilty person, you can do the rest."

"How do you know?" Brooke asked.

She frowned.

"Mr. Blessing was my new employer," she told him. "He was a private detective in New York. I did some typing for him, and he formed the idea that I was intelligent enough to be of use to him permanently."

"What do you know about Gordon Black?"

"I know that Mr. Blessing had been to England to collect evidence against him for complicity in the Jersey River Railway scandal, whatever that may be, and I know that he had succeeded. That evidence was in Mr. Blessing's possession when he boarded the steamer. I expect it is in Gordon Black's now!"

"I think," Brooke suggested, "that you had better come with me to the captain."

"What is the use?" she replied impatiently. "There is work to be done yet—your share of the work. I have pointed out the man. It is for you to forge the links. You start knowing who he is. You have only to work a little way backward."

"All the same," Brooke persisted, "I think that you ought to come with me to the captain."

"I'll come when I think best," she answered tersely. "Gordon Black has seen me with Mr. Blessing. If he sees me with you on the way to the captain he'll suspect something. See what you can do on your own. I'll come in afterward.

"I'll tell you this much more, if you like. Less than forty-eight hours ago Gordon Black offered Mr. Blessing twenty-five thousand pounds for a document in his possession — an illegal transfer, or something of the sort. Mr. Blessing refused. He was acting for a client—Gordon Black's great enemy."

Brooke made his way back to his own part of the ship. He spent nearly an hour in putting a few cautious inquiries. Then he rejoined Constance, who was still sitting in her corner reading, and who watched his approach with evident displeasure.

"You are very foolish," she said, as she put her book down, "to come over here so often. I have told you that Gordon Black has seen Mr. Blessing talking to me. He will be on his guard."

"It does not appear to be of much consequence," Brooke remarked. "Listen. There is no doubt whatever as to the time when the murder took place. It was between half past eleven and five and twenty to twelve."

"Well?"

"From ten o'clock until the news of the affair was brought there Black was playing bridge in the smoking-room."

The girl frowned.

"Is that certain?"

"Absolutely," he assured her. "I have it from the smoking-room steward, and Major Bryce—who was one of the four. Without a doubt he was in the smoking-room when the affair took place."

She seemed a little staggered. For a few moments she said nothing.

"Failing Mr. Gordon Black," Brooke continued, "I presume you have no other suggestions? I'm getting rather keen."

She shook her head.

"It must have been Gordon Black," she declared.

"But the man has a perfect, a truthful alibi," Brooke ventured to point out.

"I can't help it," she persisted obstinately. "Mr. Blessing told me himself that he was afraid of him. Those papers included a forged transfer. He meant having them. He had offered Mr. Blessing twenty-five thousand pounds for them and was refused."

Brooke pointed to a school of porpoises.

"Let us talk about something else," he suggested. "What are you going to do when you get to New York?"

"Give evidence against Gordon Black at his trial for murder, I hope," she replied doggedly. "Afterward—well, I shall find something."

IV

When Brooke returned to his chair he found that his invalid neighbor had been brought on deck and was lying in the next one, smothered over with rugs. Brooke spoke to him pleasantly, and would have passed on but for the other's obvious disappointment.

"You're going to sit down for a few minutes, aren't you?" the fellow piped out, his thin voice shriller and weaker than ever. "I've had a bad night, and I'm nervous this morning. Say, what day do you reckon we shall fetch New York?"

Brooke seated himself. The cheering up of the man seemed to be a charge upon the whole ship's company.

"About Friday morning," he replied cheerfully. "Nothing to make us late that I can see."

The little man began to count upon his fingers.

"Let me see—to-day is Tuesday. Then there's Wednesday and Thursday — two whole days! I reckon I'll last that long—somehow," he added wistfully.

Brooke laughed at him.

"Of course you will," he declared encouragingly. "Why, I heard you walked across the deck alone yesterday morning."

Dr. Browning smiled — a little vaingloriously.

"Not all the way—very nearly as far as the rail," he admitted. "My book blew away."

He was silent for a few minutes, looking out across the sea.

"You know," he continued, "when I started on this voyage I wasn't afraid, because I felt that I'd just as soon die at sea as anywhere else. I took kind of a fancy to end it all out here. Directly I got on board and looked through a port-hole I changed my mind, though. Queer thing, eh? I was afraid!”

“I wouldn't think about it at all, if I were you,” Brooke advised. “Make up your mind that you're going to get better. That's the way.”

“I CHOOSE YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE AN ENGLISHMAN”

A queer little smile flickered for a moment upon the gray lips. The man's face was almost ghastly.

“There isn't any chance of that,” he said simply. “I'd like to live out the voyage—that's all.”

“Have you friends who are meeting you in New York?” Brooke asked.

“Perhaps,” the other answered. “I cannot say for certain. My people live out in the West.”

The purser came along and paused to talk cheerfully for a few minutes to the ship's invalid. Afterward a benevolent old lady brought up her camp-stool to his side. Brooke lay with half-closed eyes, looking out upon the sea.

His thoughts wandered from the pathetic little figure by his side to Mr. Gordon Black, who was strolling up and down the deck smoking a cigar. Brooke felt a peculiar interest in studying the dark, handsome face.

That the man had been a bold adventurer, a buccaneer of finance, was true without a doubt. Was there really the shadow of that ghastly crime concealed behind the mask of those set features and level brows?

He stood smoking his cigar stolidly, one hand grasping the rail of the steamer, his eyes fixed upon the silver streak which fringed the horizon. Brooke felt that this quiet sea voyage had been touched unexpectedly with the hand of tragedy, and try how he would to put him in the background of his thoughts, this man stood out the central figure in it.

There was a shrill blast from the fog-horn; they had passed into a little bank of white mist. Immediately afterward a cabin steward came up, looked around the deck for a moment, and, finally advancing to Gordon Black, touched him on the shoulder and presented him with a note.

“For me?” Brooke heard him ask.

“Left in your cabin, sir,” the man replied, as he turned away.

Brooke watched his neighbor break the seal of the letter and read its contents. They seemed to consist of a few lines only, yet the seconds passed into minutes and the eyes of the reader were still riveted upon the half-sheet of paper.

He seemed at first a little dazed; he had the appearance of a man who struggles with a message sent him in some foreign language. Then Brooke saw the blanching of the man's cheeks, the sudden shiver, the quick, stern effort to recover his self-control.

There was no longer any doubt. Tragedy and Mr. Gordon Black walked hand in hand!

V

Brooke went back again to Constance Robinson that evening. He found her promenading alone on the lower deck, her hands clasped behind her back. She welcomed him with a smile which, dubious though it was, gave him an unreasonable amount of pleasure. He fell into step by her side. It was a dark, windy night and the sea sang to them.

"Any progress?" she asked.

"None to speak of," he admitted frankly. "I fancy I'm not lucky this time."

She turned upon him almost fiercely.

"I wonder how you dare mention the word to me!" she exclaimed. "You have just the glimmering of an idea as to what my life has been up to now. Well, I get another chance — a good salary — a new profession in a new country—and this is what happens. My employer is murdered on the way out. I haven't even drawn my first week's pay!"

"No good brooding over it," Brooke remarked briskly. "You've health and strength, and you're bound for a country where those things count. Do you mind going a little slower? It's a treat to see you walk, but I'm out of breath."

She slackened her pace at once. She had been walking with the long, free paces and swift-footed grace of some forest animal. She glanced doubtfully at her companion. His tone seemed to indicate a certain change in his attitude toward her.

"Oh! I'm not afraid," she declared. "I'll find work — only — I wish to God, when I start out to look for it, that I were a man!"

He understood, and this time was silent. The mood passed, and he was careful to take no advantage of it. Presently she stopped at the end of the deck nearest to the first-class quarters.

"Good night!" she said. "I'm sorry you're not succeeding."

"By the bye," he asked, "you didn't, by any chance, send a note to Mr. Gordon Black, did you?"

"I? Of course not! Why?"

"He had one from some one which upset him pretty badly."

"Find out who sent it," she insisted eagerly.

"My idea," he replied. "I was just waiting till I'd spoken to you."

"It's very likely the beginning of negotiations," she declared. "Remember that whoever killed poor Mr. Blessing, even if it wasn't Gordon Black, has those papers and the forged transfers."

Brooke sighed.

"I'm afraid," he said, "they'll begin to tumble to me soon, but I'll do my best."

VI

The next day they ran into a storm. The skies were leaden, the ship developed a very ugly pitch, the decks were deserted, swept with rain and spray. The steamer-chairs, even on the covered deck, were lashed to a rail. The whole outlook was unspeakably dreary. About eleven o'clock a cabin steward came to Brooke in the smoking-room.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said. "Dr. Browning, the old gentleman who is ill, would take it as a great favor if you would step down to his stateroom for a moment. The poor gentleman's very bad indeed, sir," he added confidentially. "Don't look as though he'd last the day."

"Sure he meant me?" Brooke asked, a little puzzled. "I've only spoken to him once or twice on deck."

"Certain, sir," the man replied. "He wanted to speak to you most particular."

Brooke made his way down below at once. The little man was lying half-dressed upon the sofa berth and his appearance was ghastly. He motioned Brooke to close the door.

"Sorry to find you queer," the latter remarked cheerfully. "This weather's enough to knock any one over."

"I'm nearly done," was the reply. "I didn't reckon upon this. Please listen."

"Anything I can do for you—" Brooke began.

" Two nights ago," Dr. Browning interrupted, " the man Blessing was murdered just outside my stateroom there—only a few feet away, mind. I was lying where I am now. I heard the scuffle, the blow, the groan."

" Great Heavens!" Brooke exclaimed. " You didn't see the fellow, did you?"

The doctor shook his head. He was speaking with the utmost difficulty.

" I saw nothing, but I heard the fall of something just outside my door, which was about a foot open. I dragged myself there. I picked up this."

He opened his coat; a long envelope, apparently stuffed with papers, was lying there. Brooke gazed at it with fascinated eyes.

" Why haven't you mentioned it before—told the captain or some one?" he asked.

The little doctor paused for several moments to recover his breath.

" I made up my mind that this packet should go straight from my hands to the chief of police in New York," he said. " Everything is talked about on board ship. I decided to keep silent. Since then I have been terrified — almost to death. Last night and the night before a man has been in my room. My trunk, the cushions here, have been searched. I lay shivering in my bunk. The packet was between my two mattresses."

" Who was the man?" Brooke asked.

" I couldn't reach the light—I dared not have turned it on if I could have done so," was the almost plaintive reply. " It might have been a steward. I had courage once—but now—you see what I am. I can't bear another night. I want you to take this packet."

Once more he produced the envelope. Brooke took it.

" What am I to do with it?"

" Keep it until we are safely off the steamer," Dr. Browning begged. " Bring it to me the moment after we land. I shall be at No. 387, the Waldorf-Astoria. My room is already engaged. I shall lie there and wait for you."

Brooke fingered the packet irresolutely.

" May I ask you this?" he said. " Why do you select me as your confidant? We are complete strangers, and many of the other passengers upon the ship have talked with you more."

" I choose you," Browning replied, " because you are an Englishman, and a person whose appearance, forgive me, renders you free from any suspicion of being mixed up in this affair. You are so obviously a young Englishman of good family, with no particular occupation and no particular interests in the world. There is a wide-spread plot which turns upon these papers, and if, before I die, I can help toward an act of justice, it will make me happy. You are just the person whom no one would suspect of complicity in it."

Brooke thrust the packet into the breast-pocket of his tweed coat, which he buttoned up closely.

" Very well," he promised, " I'll do as you say."

The little man leaned back upon his sofa.

" I shall sleep now," he declared, with a sigh of content. " I never closed my eyes all last night."

Brooke tiptoed his way out of the stateroom and sat in his steamer-chair upon the deck for an hour without moving. Then he rose and made his way to the second-class portion of the ship, where he found Constance in a sheltered corner.

" Supposing," he said, " I was able to help toward the clearing up of this little affair, I take it that it would be a sort of satisfaction to you?"

" It would be more than that," she answered firmly.

" Very well, then," he continued. " I am by way of making a bargain. Supposing I succeed, will you lunch with me at the Waldorf-Astoria at one o'clock on the day after we arrive, and will you promise to let me know your whereabouts for the first month of your stay in New York?"

She looked at him, a little softened—and yet suspicious.

" I can't see what satisfaction that would be to you," she remarked.

" My lookout, that, isn't it?" he reminded her gently.

" I haven't any clothes to come out to luncheon in," she told him.

" If you will wear the clothes," he replied, " which you wore when you came on the steamer—"

" Well, I had to have a new frock," she interrupted, a little defiantly, " and I couldn't come abroad without a new hat, could I?"

He laughed.

" It's a bargain, then."

"Aren't you going to tell me anything?" she asked.

"Not at present," he replied. "To tell you the truth, there's so much that I don't understand myself."

VII

THE end of the voyage, so eagerly looked forward to by many of the passengers, was certainly not disappointing in the matter of sensation.

The steamer was boarded in the harbor by two detectives, whose every movement was watched with intense interest. They made their way at once to the captain's cabin, where they remained for at least a quarter of an hour.

When they returned to the deck they came face to face with Mr. Gordon Black. He was smoking a large cigar and, so far from showing any signs of discomfiture, accosted the two men and shook hands with them. A slight sense of disappointment began to manifest itself among the passengers. They were now almost up to the landing-stage and nothing had happened.

Mr. Gordon Black, whose arrest by the New York police had been looked upon as a certainty, remained very much at liberty. The two detectives were talking to no one nor showing any signs of imminent action. It seemed, too, as though the murderer of Mr. Blessing were to walk off the ship unmolested.

Then there was a little commotion at the companionway. Two of the stewards emerged, carrying a steamer-chair upon which Dr. Browning was stretched out. He was wearing a shore-going hat, and, though his appearance was ghastly, he was doing his best to exchange farewells with those of the passengers whom he passed.

His chair was set down close to the gangway and within a few feet of the detectives. At that moment Brooke strolled up. He pointed to the chair.

"I give that man in charge, officer," he said to the nearer detective, "for the murder of William Blessing on this boat."

Brooke had spoken without raising his voice in the least, but his words had been perfectly distinct. What followed seemed nothing short of miraculous.

With a single bound Browning was at the side of the ship. He sent sprawling a passenger who inadvertently barred his path, and a seaman who made an instinctive movement toward him he tripped up with a dexterity which was simply amazing.

They saw him for a moment and heard a splash. Then every one rushed to the side of the ship.

"Your man, right enough," Brooke remarked to the detective.

"That's Tim, sure," was the prompt reply. "I wish to God I'd believed it, and we wouldn't have bungled the job!"

The steamer was within forty yards of the dock, and the only open space around was the space which had been left for her to clear. Two sailors dived, and a dozen boats were in the water within five minutes. Nevertheless, the passengers were obliged to disembark without learning what had become of their late steamer companion.

VIII

CONSTANCE arrived punctually at the Waldorf on the following morning. Brooke led her to the table which he had reserved and watched the color stream into her cheeks as she bent over the roses which were lying by her plate.

"Well," he announced cheerfully, "I've ordered luncheon — all manner of weird dishes, with just one or two we are sure of. I didn't order champagne because I thought you'd prefer that for dinner."

"What do you mean?" she asked, half indignantly.

"Never mind," he replied. "I can see you are bubbling over with questions. Read the papers this morning?"

She shook her head.

"I've been too busy."

"Then I'll have to tell you a few facts first," he said. "The whole affair hinges around the great struggle between Gordon Black and Seth Pryor. Black stepped over the line a bit and had to leave the country. The documents which would have incriminated him were in England.

"Blessing went over, as Pryor's agent, to buy them. Our little friend, Dr. Browning, who has a dozen aliases, and who is more wanted by the New York police than any other man on earth, was also on to the game, only what he wanted was to steal the papers. Very well. Blessing gets them. Gordon Black, acting on a hint he received from New York, sails for home.

"Dr. Browning—Tim, the New York police call him — books on the same steamer. Tim murders Blessing and gets

THEY SAW HIM FOR A MOMENT AND THEN HEARD A SPLASH

hold of the documents. Having got them, he tries to think out the safest way to make use of them. Blessing was murdered outside his door. On the whole, it is safer for him to land in New York without those documents in his possession.

"He pitches on the most ingenuous-looking of his fellow passengers and hands them over to me to take care of. One or two little things about the man, however, during the last few days, gave me to think, as one says. I watched him like a lynx for the last twenty-four hours and was convinced that he was shamming. The rest is obvious."

"And what about Mr. Gordon Black?" she asked.

"Therein," Brooke replied, "lies the humor of the situation, if one can use such a word at all in connection with the affair. The two great factions headed by Black and Seth Pryor made peace one day last week. The documents for which our little friend hoped to get a million dollars, and for which Mr. Black had actually bid twenty-five thousand pounds, are valueless. Quite a dramatic little business, wasn't it?"

"What about the note which you saw Mr. Gordon Black receive on deck?"

"That was from Browning, although he didn't sign it," Brooke explained. "It was just a little reminder that those documents were still in existence."

"There isn't anything in life," she said softly, "so wonderful as to realize these things going on around you; to watch other people and wonder what secrets they are carrying about with them."

"I'm glad you feel like that," Brooke answered, "because that sort of thing is a bit of a hobby of mine, too. Found another post yet?"

"Not yet."

"I offer you one," he declared, filling her glass with hock. "Secretary, companion, and—"

She put out her hand, checking him, as if his words had smitten her with poignant edge.

"No, no," she pleaded, her soft eyes appealing to him sorrowfully; "wait, please wait!"

He lapsed into thoughtful silence. Perhaps he was pushing the matter rather indelicately, somewhat hastily. So he reasoned, after a minute's cogitation. Better wait, indeed, than ruin it all.

"You had joined Blessing," said he slowly, looking at her with frank directness, "and meant to help him in his detective work."

She nodded, the flush of excitement, due to the crisis which she had staved off, brightening her cheeks and lips. Brooke wanted to kiss her. He wanted to tell her so. But it might be wiser—of course it *would* be wiser—to wait.

He leaned his elbows on the table, talking across to her confidentially. "What do you say to a partnership—business—with me as the other member of the firm?" he suggested. "Let's open a detective bureau in London—there's a world of work waiting—on equal terms."

She shook her head. "I have no capital for such a venture," said she. "I must stay here and fight."

"You have your brains and your typewriter," said he, his face glowing with the heat of his new idea. "You can't remain here friendless, with no business connection, you know. Say that you'll put your typewriter and business experience against my capital and join the venture."

"There's a great field—with your well-known talent as a business asset," she admitted, catching some of his fire.

"Then let's call it done!" he exclaimed. "We'll return by the next steamer, and I'll have you near me, at least, while I—" he caught himself, his face paling, as if afraid.

"While you?" she smiled.

"Wait," said he.

She offered her hand. "A strictly business partnership, Mr. Brooke," she blushed. "And you must promise me not to mention—not to—to—" There was a supplication almost painful in her solemn eyes.

"I'll wait," said he.

THE WONDERS

I dream of the ancient wonders—of the Isle of Hy Brasail
That rides through the mists of Mayo, then fades like a fading sail;
I dream of the ancient wonders, but there's one that haunts me more,
'Tis the fawnlike grace of Moira upon Lough Corrib's shore!

I dream of the ancient wonders—of the wells of Death and Life,
Of the Voices of the Forest that quell both hate and strife;
I dream of the ancient wonders, but greater than them all
Is the luring laugh of Moira when day's at evenfall!

I dream of the ancient wonders—of the Cross caught up in air,
Of the swan of sweet Feale Water that was a maiden fair;
I dream of the ancient wonders, but each fades in eclipse
At the lifted arms of Moira, and Moira's lifted lips!

Clinton Scollard

THE SHOP

I TOLD you last month in The Shop that "The Christian," by Hall Caine, ran fifteen months. After sending the copy to press I was curious to know how many serial stories MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE had carried in twenty years, and the average length of run.

An examination of the bound volumes shows that in this time we have published fifty-two stories serially—thirty-five full book-length novels and seventeen novelettes. The full book-length stories averaged to run ten months and the novelettes six months. So you see that even with the half-length novels you had to wait six months to get the finish, and with the full book-length novels you had to wait ten months to get the finish.

Habit is a tremendous force in the world and habit must be responsible for this kind of novel reading. It got its grip on us many years ago when magazines carried higher-grade stories than other publications, when there were comparatively few publications and reading matter was relatively a scarce article. But habit loses its hold after a while, and if we sense the public taste aright, it has now lost it with respect to serial publication in monthly parts.

Thirty-five full book-length novels in twenty years is an average of less than two novels a year. Now we give twelve full book-length novels a year — a complete novel every month. This would mean thirty-six novels in three years, or two hundred and forty novels in twenty years against thirty-five under the old serializing system.

Figures like these are both illuminating and instructive. They bring out clearly the bigness of the thing MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE is doing. Of course if THE MUNSEY were merely a fiction magazine with no articles, no illustrations, nothing but stories, it would be quite another matter. But THE MUNSEY is a great big magazine wholly apart from this complete book feature which is carried on added pages.

The New MUNSEY MAGAZINE with this new feature is practically a double-number magazine both in size and in contents. The space given up to the novel isn't taken from the general magazine. On the contrary the general features of the magazine, with illustrations, have been increased the better to give balance to the great big book feature.

Apart from the statistics relative to the number of serial stories we have published and their length of run, all I have said could easily be determined from an examination of the magazine. But I find that people as a rule are too busy, or too indifferent to dig out facts and formulate conclusions for themselves.

I am telling you all this about MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE because it is very much worth your knowing. And when you know it and realize what you are getting for fifteen cents, you will better appreciate the bargain you are buying and will be pretty apt to tell your neighbors and friends about it.

* * * * *

While I am on this subject of the serialization of novels, I mustn't forget to tell you that so far as the Munsey Publishing House is concerned we have squared ourselves to our contention that the monthly publication isn't the thing for the serializing of a novel. THE MUNSEY, *The Argosy, The Railroad Man*, all monthlies, have abandoned the publication of serial stories. The only one remaining of our monthlies to carry them was *The All-Story Magazine*, and now it will be issued weekly, which will make it the right kind of vehicle for serializing novels.

We began work on this problem of the elimination of the serial story from our monthly magazines two years ago when we combined *The Scrap Book* and *The Cavalier*, both monthly magazines, and issued the amalgamated publication as a weekly under the name of *The Cavalier*. Those two publications, hobbling along in the monthly field, were not whirlwind successes, though at that they were not altogether lame ducks. They came in at a time when the serialization of novels was losing its grip in the monthlies, so they did not get so big a hold on the reading public as our earlier publications. But when we combined them and issued them as a weekly magazine the amalgamated publication instantly sprang into popular favor and has shown a steady, consistent, persistent growth ever since.

The Cavalier is an all-fiction weekly magazine with a bunch of serials, one or two novelettes, and a good supply of short stories. It has proved itself the real thing as a vehicle for the serialization of novels, and has won a host of friends.

With serial stories eliminated from all our other monthly magazines except *The All-Story* it became a question with us whether we should continue it in the monthly field and cut out its serials or whether we should retain them and change it over to a weekly publication. The burden of argument favored the latter, though I don't mind telling you that *The All-Story* is now and always has been a very profitable publication, throughout its nine years of life.

With the elimination of *The All-Story Magazine* from the monthly field the Munsey Publishing House wholly abandons the scheme of serializing novels in monthly parts. The serial story, properly presented, has its place with the reading public, and a very big place at that. Our contention is, however, that it is not properly presented in monthly fragments, so presented as to satisfy the readers of to-day. The weekly, on the other hand, does present the serial properly and in a satisfactory manner to this swifter age—this short-cut, high-pressure period of living. The serial story in weekly form and the complete book-length novel in monthly form are sound and logical. The former will better suit one class of readers, the latter will better suit another class.

* * * * *

Herewith are a few significant letters and an appreciative comment of the London *Telegraph* bearing on our new move with respect to the complete novel, and with a fling at the serial in monthly instalments.

NAZARETH, PA.

You invite your subscribers to write you in regard to the new arrangement of MUNSEY'S. As a reader of fifteen years' standing I wish to make use of that privilege. I heartily approve of the abolition of the serial story and the substitution of the complete novel. But it is with sincere regret that the men of my family and myself note the absence of the clever financial department. We hope we may soon see it restored to its former place in MUNSEY'S.

AMY F. LAMB.

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391 LEAVENWORTH ST.,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

At last a magazine with a backbone! December MUNSEY with "Black Is White," is IT. I am tired of short stories and will not read any story continued in a monthly magazine, so had not bought any monthly for some time until I saw Munsey's new idea advertised in a newspaper. I have read the December number and consider my time well spent. I must now go to a news-stand and buy your January number.

A. V. CHASE.

MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA.

Your magazine of January is the best ever. Its articles and stories run the entire scale of human emotions. I am an extensive reader and I was simply amazed to find such an unprecedented array of talent in one single number of a magazine. I have not forgotten who it was that gave to America its first splendid publication at a price within the reach of every home.

I desire to say that "The Plaint of a Spinster" should be in shape to frame and be given a prominent place on the wall of the "family room" in every home. The author of this article has bravely told the problem of life as she feels it.

R. BRITTON.

1730 WEST 25TH ST.,
CLEVELAND, OHIO.

I have been but an intermittent reader of MUNSEY up to this time, but you can now write me down as a "constant" since you have decided to eliminate that abomination, the serial, which is worse than the most sawdusty breakfast-food for the mind, and are to furnish monthly a complete novel and make good at once without any fussy preliminary delays.

ALFRED HENRY LEECE.

WEIR, TEXAS.

I am renewing for MUNSEY'S again. I've taken the magazine since 1901. It grows better every number, seems to me. I take four magazines at the $1.50 price, but nothing compares to MUNSEY'S. The finest thing yet is the complete novel in each issue.

MRS. MAUDE DAVIDSON.

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40 WEST 4TH AVE.,
COLUMBUS, OHIO.

I must congratulate you upon your new idea. You are the emancipator of the readers of current publications. This "continued in our next stunt" has had its day. If any one thing can spoil a story it is "continued in our next." Same as taking a bite out of an apple, and some one snatches it out of your hand and says: "I'll give you another next month."

S. A. ENGELHARD.

MONTEREY, CAL.

It seems longer than twenty years ago since I bought one of my first MUNSEYS. I haven't missed a number in these last twenty years and every one has been *clean* and I am proud of you. While many others fill their pages with passionate, suggestive, red-hot stories you have hewn to the mark. Even in politics you are there and I gratefully take off my hat to you.

WILLIAM T. MITCHELL.

815 BELL BUILDING,
MONTGOMERY, ALA.

Allow me to extend my congratulations for the splendid December number of your magazine, with especial reference to the complete novel that you offer. Your radical departure from the old "continued in our next" style of gripping the readers' interest is magnificent and I predict that it will meet with the unbounded approval of your legion of subscribers and readers. Your McCutcheon story was delightful and to think that you can offer same—and novels of similarly high standard—for fifteen cents reflects not only the confidence you have in your own business judgment but the confidence you have in your loyal readers—confidence that is not misplaced. It goes without saying that from now on I will be a regular purchaser of your magazine.

J. R. DANIELL.

110 WESTCOTT ST.,
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

For several years I was a constant reader of MUNSEY'S, but got sick and tired of serial stories and can't remember reading an issue for five years. Last month I bought one. It appealed to me again. I read the announcement of no serials so I shall read it as long as it appeals to me *and it does to-day*. I am a traveling man and have been for twelve years and I have many weary hours to pass, sometimes thousands of miles from home, from wife and daughter, so the magazine is a comfort to me.

L. S. PRUTSMAN.

2021 SUMMIT ST.,
KANSAS CITY, MO.

I too think you have struck the key-note in magazine construction in the book-length novel. It fills a long-felt want to the majority of magazine readers and I will render my heartiest support by inducing my friends to purchase THE MUNSEY and judge for themselves the superiority of this magazine. I induced several of my friends to read "Black Is White" in the December issue, with the result that I found the January issue in their homes very soon after its appearance upon the news-stands.

RUSSELL F. NORVELL.

(From the London *Daily Telegraph* of December 2, 1913.)

There can be no doubt the serial story, appearing month after month in a magazine, is somewhat out of date. Such a method of publication may have been well enough in an earlier age when there was less to think about, when the incidents of a romance could be meditated upon during intervening weeks, and the thread lightly taken up again as soon as the next instalment made its appearance. But our lives are more crowded nowadays. We read more quickly and forget more easily, and this is against the novel in snippets, no matter how excellent it may be in other respects.

The editor of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, recognizing this, announces that after the present number, the publication will offer its readers no more fiction on the instalment plan; henceforth everything begun will be complete in the same issue. Of course to do this involves the making of a bigger magazine. * * * How well the change is likely to work may be judged from the Christmas number, which is substantial, handsome in appearance externally, and within full of good reading, making no call upon the reader's patience, but carrying him on in the full tide of his interest to the end in each instance. It is remarkable how much a magazine will hold under this plan! * * * A very remarkable sixpenny-worth of literature.

These letters are characteristic of all we receive covering the complete novel and of the attitude of the reading public with regard to the monthly fragment of the serial story. We have had two or three protests against "so much reading" in a single number, but these appear to be sporadic, not representative.

Then, too, when the novel of the month does not happen to suit the fancy of some reader, he is more acutely impressed with his dislike for it than if it dragged over a year. In so long a time one's feelings of disapproval become flabby.

The complete novel in a magazine can no more suit every reader than does every book. Individual tastes rule alike in the one case as in the other.

We fully realize this in the selection of our book novels and govern ourselves by what, it seems to us, will suit the widest circle of readers.

The comment of the London *Telegraph* shows thought, and sound analysis of the public taste of to-day—the change that has come about in our living.

FRANK A. MUNSEY

LIGHT VERSE

PHYLLIS IN LENT

WHEN Phyllis does her hair in Lent,
That season of the penitent
Becomes a time of joy to me;
I worship with alacrity.

On other days of all the year,
Dear Phyllis's hair is *de rigueur,*
With curled waves running o'er and o'er,
Or lofty tiers of pompadour.

With bandeaux, combs, and fearsome things
That stand upright on spiral springs,
An awesome head it seems to be,
To simple mortal man like me.

But parted now in saintly grace,
So softly framing in her face,
And smoothly banded as a nun—
I know full well that Lent's begun.

And when in dim, religious nook
She sits apart with serious look,
The woman in her seems to stir,
And draw my heart right out to her.

And like the faithful old Dog Tray,
I hang around the livelong day;
For it is time divinely spent
To worship Phyllis's hair in Lent!

ENVOY

And I would fast for forty days,
And penance do in divers ways,
So I might be omnipotent
To keep her hair as 'tis in Lent!

Eileen Moretta

"GIRL WANTED"

FIRST WEEK

GIRL wanted—German, Dutch, or Swede;
Must be good-looking and polite;
Good cook, and one we will not need
To have to watch to do things right.
Must care for baby, wash, and bake,
And keep things looking clean and neat;
Must sweep, and all the beds must make—
Address J. P., 10 Umpty Street.

SECOND WEEK

Girl wanted—white, with reference;
Not over twenty-five years old;
Her looks are of no consequence,
If she will do as she is told.
No washing will she have to do;
She can sit down with us to eat;
Have Sunday afternoons off, too—
Address J. P., 10 Umpty Street.

THIRD WEEK

Girl wanted—white or colored; one
Who'd like a homelike place to stay;
There is no cooking to be done;
She can stop work at three each day.
Will let her have the parlor nights,
Where with her fellow she can meet;
And she can exercise her rights—
Address J. P., 10 Umpty Street.

FOURTH WEEK

Girl wanted—white, black, green, or blue;
Her age will cut no ice at all;
There's very little work to do;
Can have the front room off the hall.
My wife will cook; we both will wait
Until she's had a chance to eat;
Her own conditions she may state—
Address J. P., 10 Umpty Street.

E. A. Brininstool

HOUSEHOLD GODS

THE sofa and the big armchair
Were holding tête-à-tête
(Drawn up before a feeble fire
That flickered in the grate),
The family had gone to bed;
'Twas very, very late!

The sofa moved its weary springs
With reminiscent creak;
"Thank goodness! Jane's young man has braced
His courage up to speak!
He's tried to say 'I love you' now
For many and many a week!"

"My, yes!" The armchair yawned assent.
"I saw the symptoms, too—
Of late he's given me a rest
To sit next Jane on you!"
"They spoon for *hours!*" the sofa groaned—
"I need upholstering new!

"These family love-affairs have worn
Me out. Oh, such a bore!
This is the fifth I've chaperoned"—
(The chair began to snore.
The fire went out—the sofa dozed—
And silence reigned once more.)

Mazie V. Caruthers

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CHILD OF CHARLES I OF ENGLAND

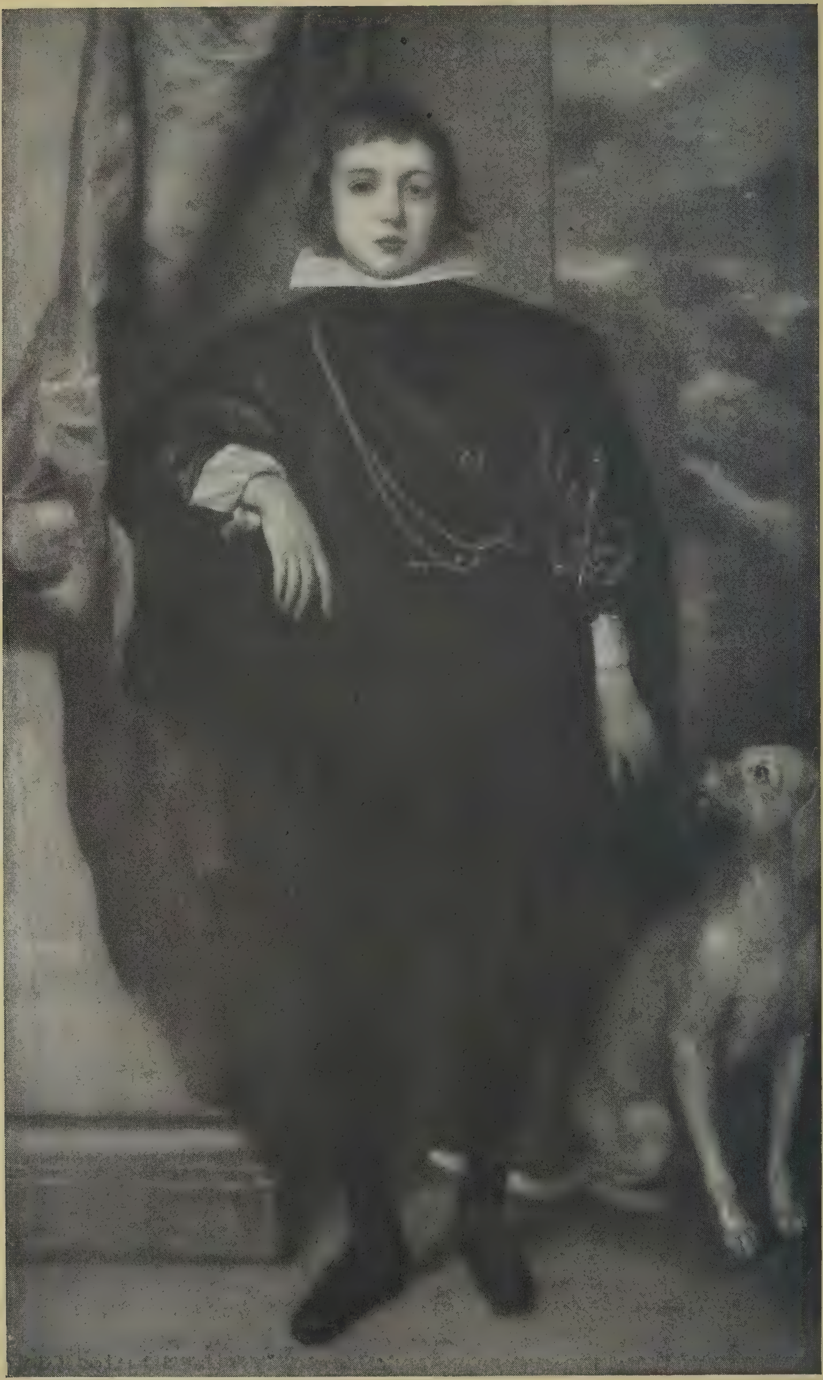
From the painting by Van Dyck

CHILDREN IN PAINTINGS

(FOURTH PAPER: SIR ANTHONY VAN DYCK)

BY CLAYTON HAMILTON

VAN DYCK painted several pictures of himself, but no other of these paintings gives us so clear an indication of his character as that youthful portrait of himself which is one of the greatest treasures of the Hermitage collection in St. Petersburg and is reproduced in connection with the present paper. A mere glance at this picture arrests us with a sense that here is a young man that we should like to know. He stands before us every inch a gentleman. The attitude of deliberate and conscious grace is so conceived as to call attention to the delicate and lovely hands. These hands—as we notice nearly always in the paintings of Van Dyck—afford us an impression that seems somehow less visual than tactile. We can easily imagine how the touch of those exquisite fingers would awaken, even



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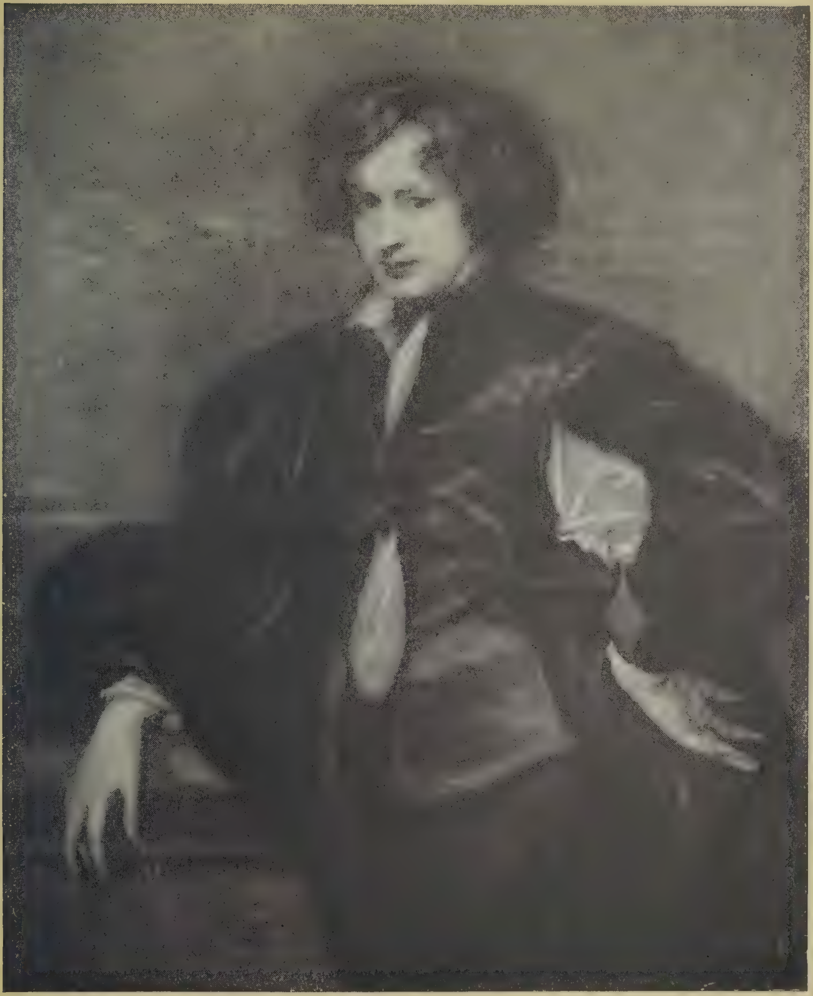
PRINCE RUPRECHT OF THE PALATINATE

From the painting by Van Dyck

in a blind man, an immediate response of sympathy. No child could cry if it were held with hands like these. We imagine also that, if this youth should speak, he would soothe us with a velvet voice—that, if he should move, he would charm us with the gracious manners of one who had been born a prince of men.

There is a serenity of fineness in this portrait which inhibits any sense of ostentation. The young Van Dyck is perfectly dressed; but he has not dressed himself up for the occasion. When the more democratic Rembrandt prepared to paint himself he usually donned a decorative hat with a flamboyant plume; but this natural aristocrat strove rather to depict himself as he meant to look, and tried to look, amid the routine of his daily life.



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HIS OWN PORTRAIT AS A YOUNG MAN

From the painting by Van Dyck

The unaffected beatitude of this depiction sums up for us the essence of the painter's life. From first to last Van Dyck was one of the most fortunate of men. He was born of a good family in Antwerp in 1599. Early in his childhood he demonstrated a true vocation for his art; and,

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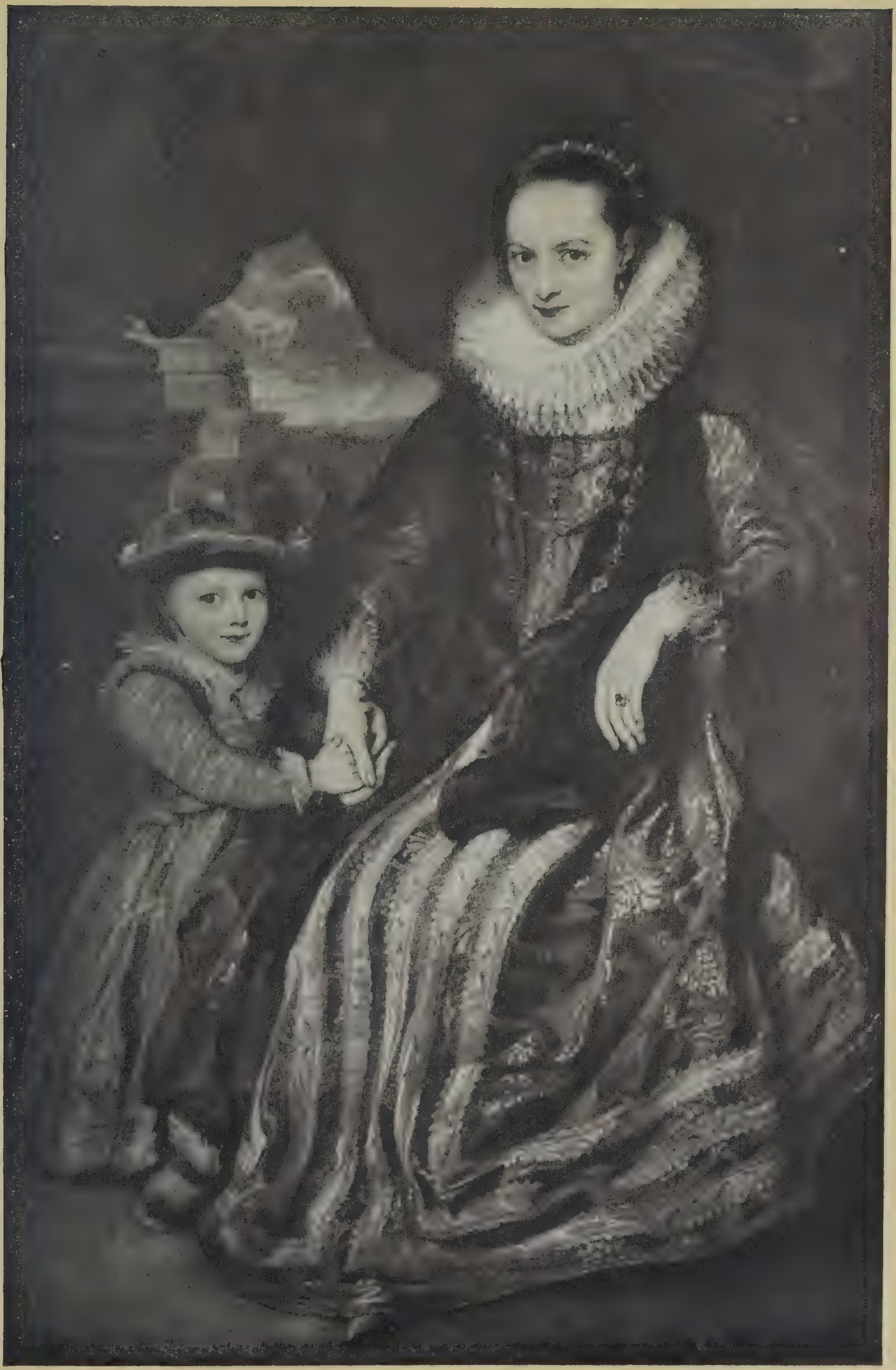
PHILIP, LORD WHARTON, AT ABOUT THE AGE OF 19

From the painting by Van Dyck

after studying with other teachers, he was apprenticed to Peter Paul Rubens at the early age of sixteen. It is by no means the least of Rubens's titles to enduring fame that he could make other people paint nearly as well as he could paint himself. There was more good work to do in Flanders than Rubens could accomplish single-handed; and he made himself a master of good workmen, whom he trained to turn out a supply that was adequate to the demand.

One of his greatest gifts to the world was the technical education of his greatest pupil. When Van Dyck attained the age of twenty his master generously sent him to Venice to learn from the great dead the final touches of his art. It was this experience in an older school that enabled Van Dyck to disassociate his own work from the utter dominance of Rubens. From Moroni he acquired a dignified serenity of composition, and from Titian he learned a mellow depth of color which distinguished his subsequent productions from those of his more dashing and fiery preceptor.

From Venice Van Dyck proceeded to Genoa and Rome; and, in both cities, he



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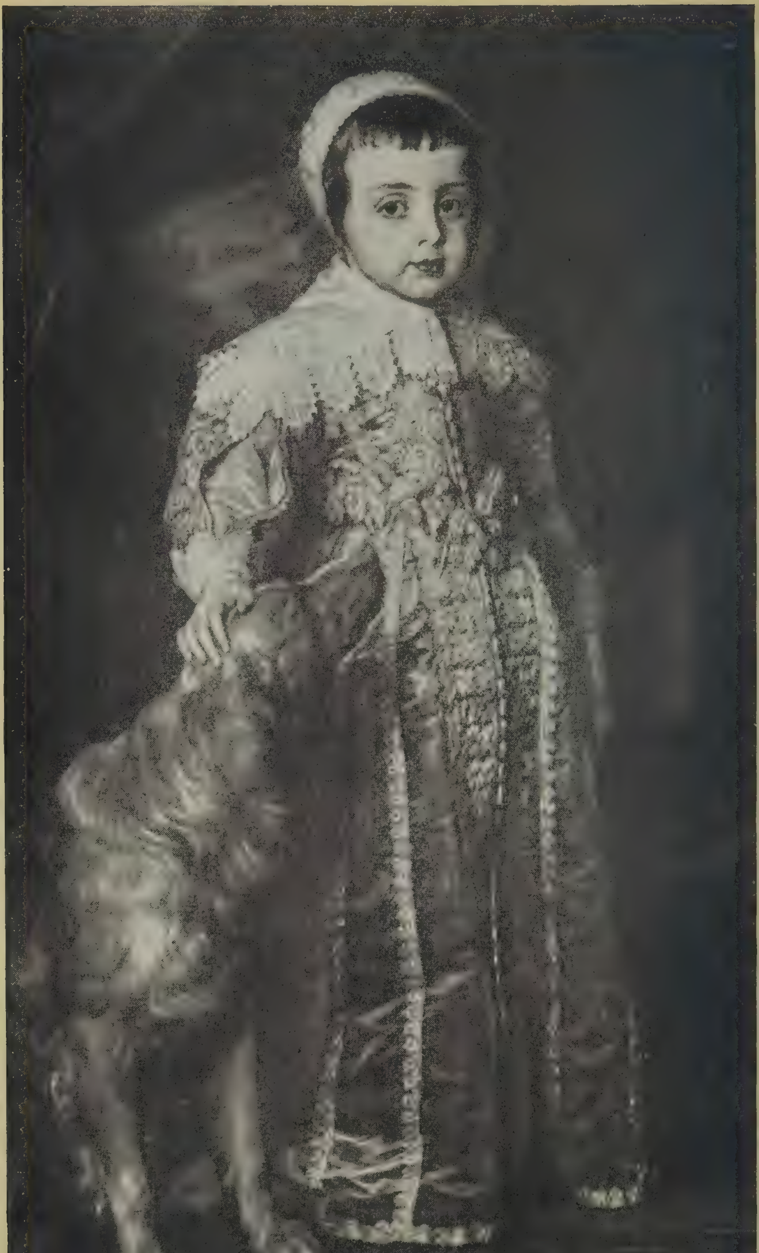
SUSANNA FOURMENT AND HER DAUGHTER CATHERINE

Original at the Hermitage, St. Petersburg. From the painting by Van Dyck



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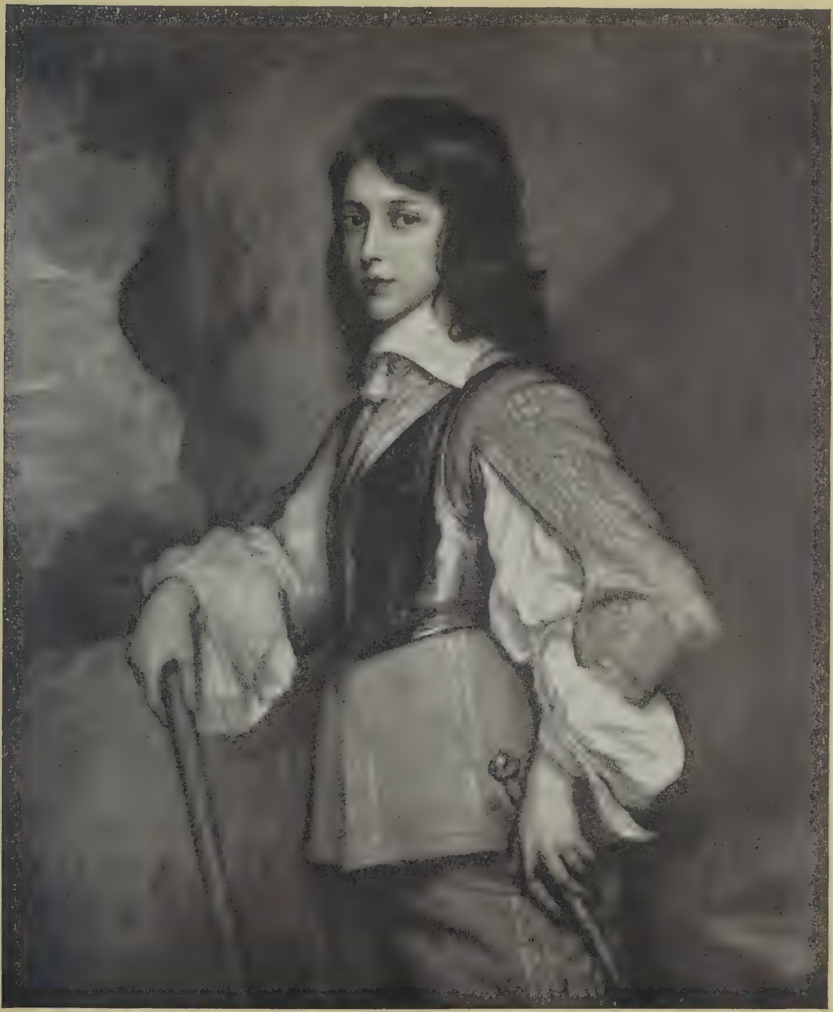
CHARLES THE SECOND

From the painting by Van Dyck

made himself famous by his portraits of people in high station. Thence he returned to Flanders, at the age of twenty-seven, to devote the next five years to the composition of religious and historical canvases. In this type of work he exhibited less vigor and virility than Rubens, but he showed a greater depth and tenderness of emotion. In his "Crucifixion" at Malines—which Sir Joshua Reynolds regarded as one of the greatest paintings in the world—the thing that touches us is not so much the muscular masculinity of the straining figures of the thieves as the ineffable sadness of the face of Christ—a sadness that summarizes all the sorrows of the world.



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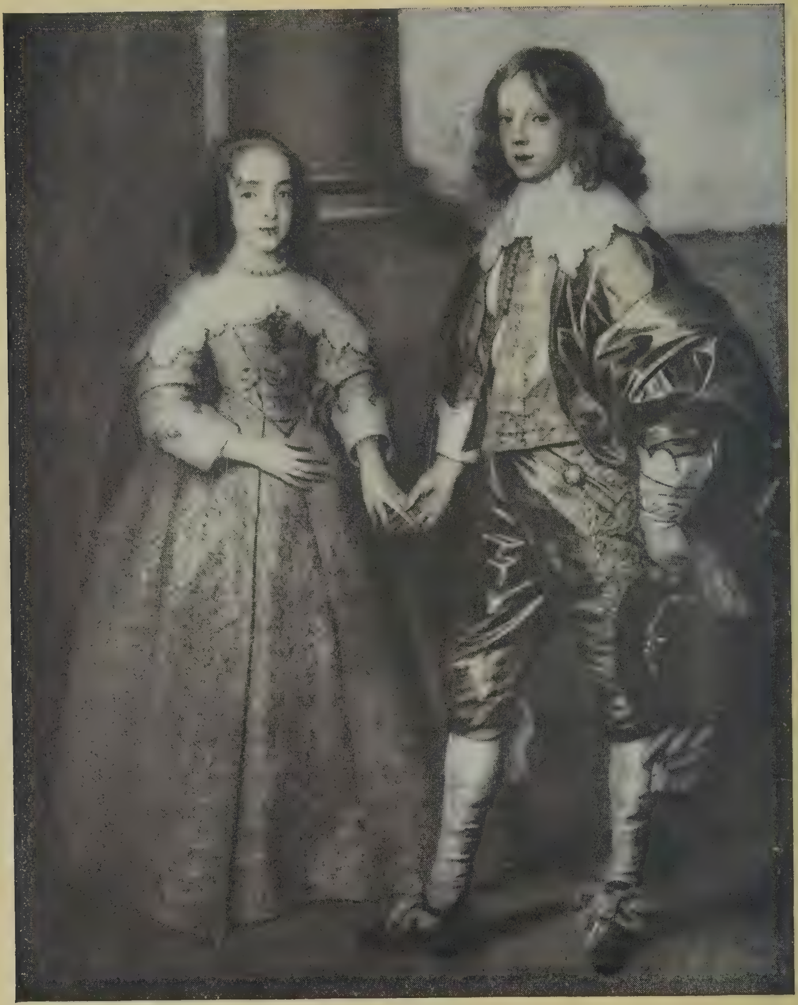
WILLIAM II, PRINCE OF NASSAU

From the painting by Van Dyck

Van Dyck was only thirty-three years old when he was invited to England by Charles I. In this connection a brief word must be spoken in praise of a monarch who has been much maligned by history. It was not the fault of Charles that he believed in the divine right of kings: this belief should be regarded, rather, as a tra-



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WILLIAM II AND MARY STUART

From the painting by Van Dyck

dition of his time. He was, indeed, an anti-democrat; but we shall appreciate his character most truly if we look upon him as a martyr to the lost ideal of aristocracy. He presents to posterity a more ingratiating figure than the rabble that overthrew him.

We see him at his best in his chosen quality as patron of the arts. He was a monarch of most cultured taste. He assembled a collection of works of art which—if it had not been dispersed by the uncultivated Cromwellians—would have made England forever after a Mecca for all lovers of the beautiful. He conferred upon Van Dyck the honor of an English knighthood and bestowed upon him a pension of two hundred pounds for life. No other painter of the time was so well equipped, in temperament and in technical dexterity, to immortalize the English aristocracy. For nearly ten years Van Dyck devoted his fine talents to this task, often working at the rate of a portrait a day—until, at the age of forty-two, he died in the fulness of his fame.

In 1899, on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of his birth, the greatest paintings of Van Dyck were assembled from all the countries of Europe and exhibited in Antwerp. Any one who—like the present writer—attended that memorable exhibition must have been impressed with an accentuated joy in the nobility of humankind. This impression resulted not so much from the technical accomplishments of the painter—his grace of composition, the mellow softness of his melting browns and dawning hints of golden glory—as from his sympathetic responsiveness to all that is naturally fine in human nature. One might move among two hundred portraits of Van Dyck without encountering a single sitter whom it was less than a privilege to know.

And this is, perhaps, the point that makes Van Dyck the most charming of all the portrait-painters of the world. Either he painted only the best people, or he painted all his people at their best. He makes us love them all at sight, with that same serenity of rewarded recognition with which he looked upon them. He establishes a personal relation between us and the sitter, because his own attitude was always personal. He shares with us the charm of his own intimate association with men and women of the finest breeding.

This charm is very potently expressed in the portrait of Lord Wharton at the age of nineteen, which was painted during the first year of Van Dyck's residence in England. There is an almost feminine tenderness in the depiction of this lovely youth. The subject is already grown to manhood, but he seems as yet unspotted from the world. The pastoral setting suggests a half-heard melody of flutes or the music of some idyl of Theocritus. Nothing could be gentler than the touch of the delicate hand upon the pike, nothing more reposeful than the serenity of the eyes. Here is a youth who looks a little wistfully on life with a purity of spirit that is unassailed and unafraid. This poetic rendering of the beauty of being young is the greatest of Van Dyck's achievements in the lyric mood.

Because his mood was naturally tender, Van Dyck was especially successful in his paintings of children. He depicted them as emblems of that perfect gentleness which was evidently his ideal of the perfect gentleman. All his finest talents—his simplicity and grace of composition, his delicacy of drawing, his softness and suavity of color — are shown in such a picture as his portrait of the youngest child of Charles I.

But Van Dyck's outlook upon the world of childhood was limited by the rare good fortune that made and kept him a companion of kings. He painted only the children of aristocrats; and in all these portraits he seems less conscious of their childishness than of their aristocracy. These little princesses and princes are assuredly the best-behaved children in the world. We cannot imagine them making a noise or getting into mischief or mussing up their clothes. And this suggests a point which it may be profitable to discuss in some detail.

ROYALTY IN MINIATURE

It is commonly asserted that the history of any individual repeats the history of the race. This assertion may be taken to explain " the savagery of children "—if we may repeat a somewhat exaggerated phrase of Thackeray's. No child is born civilized. Good manners are an acquirement that has to be taught; and children are not naturally conscious of the myriad restraints that are gradually imposed upon them as the code of civilized behavior. Hence their noisy romping, their riotous enthusiasm, their immodesty of emotion, their cruelty, their impetuous affection, their lack of consideration for others, their inconsistency, their spontaneity of spirit—all those traits in which they hark back to an earlier stage in the evolution of the human race.

Of these common traits of childhood the benignant paintings of Van Dyck afford us not the slightest indication. He seems always to have looked upon his little princesses and princes with prophetic eyes, and to have seen them less as children than as the fine ladies and gentlemen they were destined to become. This attitude is emphatically illustrated by the picture of William II and Mary Stuart in their childhood. Their hands are joined as in a royal marriage; and we seem to be looking at a king and queen dwarfed in stature by the perspective of reverted time instead of looking at a boy and girl still capable of romping in the playroom of the world.

Though Van Dyck is, of course, a greater artist than Murillo, the mood of his religious pictures is sometimes not dissimilar from the religious mood of the tender-hearted Spaniard. But when Murillo painted children he completely changed his manner; he sought out the savage little urchins of the market-squares of Seville and depicted them with a realism that makes his more idealistic works seem sentimental by comparison. But Van Dyck could never doff his aristocracy, even for the sake of meeting children on the common ground of childhood. He could no more have painted an urchin of the London streets than he could have painted a beggar in rags—though the latter subject has been profitably used by several of the greatest painters of the world.

It was stated in the first of these papers that the same artistic talents are called into exercise by the painting of children and the painting of animals. In two of the pictures that are reproduced herewith the children who are being painted are accompanied by dogs. It will be noticed that Van Dyck's dogs are just as consciously aristocratic as his children or as his gentlemen and ladies. They are exquisitely graceful, but they are the sort of dogs that never bark or leap up with muddy paws upon the laps of their masters.

But to emphasize Van Dyck's unfaltering aristocracy of outlook is not to call attention to a fault, but merely to define a limitation within which he maintains an almost undisputed mastery. There is scarcely a note of the purely boyish in the portrait of the young Prince of Nassau; but consider the dignity and the grace of that simple pose, with one hand upon a staff and the other on a sword. Here again the imagined touch of hands that might so easily reach forth to grasp our own makes us feel that we are indeed in the presence of a prince. If Van Dyck has not recorded for us the whole history of childhood, he has at least shown us the best children at their best.

THE BUZZ-SAW

BY EUGENE BOLTWOOD

MINTHORN at once perceived the mistake he had made in telling Ruth that her scheme was visionary. She folded the letter, raised her pretty eyebrows, and moved away from him.

"My dear Clement," she observed severely, "we have been engaged only four days and eighteen hours, and here you are lecturing me!"

"Well, you understood at the time that you were becoming engaged to a schoolmaster, didn't you?" said Minthorn. "Which reminds me that I must go back to the menagerie and see that the animals get their six o'clock feed." Miss Kerrington looked troubled.

"Why do you guy your profession, when you know I admire it so much?" she demanded.

"What a mood you're in!" laughed Clement. "You ought to see that little beast of a Traver Smith boy, at his meals, or anywhere else, for that matter. Deliver me from the only child of a millionaire!"

"And to think of my darling Hildegarde marrying one!" sighed Ruth, fingering the letter in her lap. "I can't help it, Clem, this news about Hildegarde Ware makes me feel dreadfully. The most intellectual girl, although she's as rich as Crœsus! Why, she ought to marry brains and culture, as I'm doing, dear—and yet—oh, she must be simply blinded. And if I can open her eyes, I mean to do it, and I don't care what you think!"

"But the news is mere gossip," said Minthorn.

"Gossip?" protested Ruth. "On the contrary, it's in the last postscript of the letter right where you always put the really important part. Listen again!" and she read from the note. "'P. S.—I heard the most awful report in Pittsburgh about Hildegarde Ware. My dear, on the best authority they say that poor Hildegarde is on the point of announcing her engagement to some widower, twice as old as she is, who has made a million in—what do you think? Pork!' "

Miss Kerrington shuddered and jumped up.

"So I am going to invite Hildegarde here to visit aunty and me," she declared resolutely; "and if it's not too late, I shall recall her to her better self."

"Match-breaking is rather delicate business," said Minthorn, smiling. "There were once a monkey and a buzz-saw, you know. How will you do it?"

"By talking to her about nothing except the value of culture and books and things," replied Ruth. "Oh, I realize it will be delicate enough! Hildegarde can't speak out to me about her widower, any more than I can speak out to her about you—yet. But I'll show you off to her a lot, Clem! That's one of the ways by which I mean to teach her the difference between brains and pork."

"Well, I'm at your service as an unconvincing exhibit," agreed the young man. "Please remember, however, that there were once a monkey and a buzz-saw—"

"Don't laugh!" broke in Miss Kerrington earnestly. "Can't you see that it's just because I'm so happy myself that I want to prevent Hildegarde from doing something that is sure to make her unhappy?"

Clement had invested all his modest capital in Starmead Academy; he was not making the enterprise pay; and he was beginning to dream of finding a wealthy backer for it, just as young doctors dream of their fairest ideal—a long-living plutocrat with a chronic complaint.

Before he went to bed that night he gazed for a full minute, according to his custom, at his favorite photograph of Ruth. Suddenly he caught himself wondering what sort of a looking girl this rich Miss Ware might be, until the disloyalty of the thought alarmed him.

II

Miss Ware turned out to be very good-looking indeed. She was sitting on the Kerringtons' piazza when Minthorn was introduced to her; and her dark, ascetic beauty made an effective contrast to the blond and rather childish prettiness of his *fiancée*.

"We've been talking about you, Clem," said Ruth. "It seems that Hildegarde is tremendously interested in boys' schools."

"And in boys' school-teachers, I hope," ventured Minthorn gallantly.

Ruth gave him a surprised stare.

"Why, I hope so, too!" said she, but, as if in some doubt.

Miss Ware had been contemplating Minthorn's handsome face with such grave but evident approval that the young man flushed a trifle.

She now leaned forward in her piazza chair.

"Mr. Minthorn, I'm going to ask a great favor," she softly said. "I want you to let me visit your school—to let me run in often and watch your work, and meet the boys, perhaps. It sounds crazy, I realize that; but you have no idea how I would enjoy it."

"Of course, Miss Ware," assented Clem with a heartiness designed to screen his astonishment. "Make yourself at home there—that is—I mean—the freedom of the academy is yours."

He glanced triumphantly at his fellow match-breaker; such gratifying enthusiasm about his school had never been shown by any one, not even by Ruth herself. But Miss Kerrington's face expressed neither triumph nor gratification.

"Hildegarde and I may possibly come over during the recreation period to-morrow, if we have nothing better to do," vouchsafed Ruth coldly.

III

The recreation period at Starmead Academy was from two until six in the afternoon; but Minthorn, on his way to luncheon, met Miss Hildegarde Ware at one o'clock on the drive in front of the dormitory. She was walking alone.

"Ruth is busy with her housekeeping," explained Miss Ware. "I hope you won't think me impertinent or—or anything. I did so want to—to have a look at the boys and the school."

"Why, that's all right," said Minthorn.

"What are their names?" queried Miss Ware.

She was still blushing, so Minthorn divined that the question was merely a struggle against time.

"Their names? Well, that tall one is Darwin, and the fat cherub near him is Leo Moore. A miniature *Mr. Pickwick,* isn't he? There's Robinson and Billie Fenn and Ziegler. The red-headed bandit is Traver Smith, most difficult boy in the school."

"Is he?" idly observed Miss Ware and examined the tip of her parasol with regained composure.

"Decidedly," Clement said, glad of an impersonal subject of conversation. "The only thing that Traver Smith cares a solitary hang about is botany. I keep him botanizing every afternoon in the Canoe Meadow just beyond that stone bridge."

"Over there?" murmured his visitor, gesturing with the parasol.

"No; more to the left," amended Minthorn and he laid his fingers on the handle in order to point it in the proper direction.

Therefore Miss Ware and he were standing rather improperly close together when carriage-wheels crunched on the gravel and Miss Ruth Kerrington appeared around the corner of the shrubbery seated in an old-fashioned phaeton behind a gray horse.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I'm sure!" she exclaimed blankly.

"For what?" laughed Miss Ware.

"Hello!" said Minthorn.

"I was going to market," resumed Ruth, with her eyes riveted upon the dashboard. "I saw your mauve dress from the road, Hildegarde, and I thought maybe you'd like to go with me. But if—"

"Of course," affirmed Miss Ware. "Thank you so much, Mr. Minthorn, and *au revoir!*"

But Minthorn's reply was inaudible. His face was almost as gray as the horse. Ruth had driven off without giving him a word or a glance.

IV

Two or three hours later, however, while Clement was proceeding to Canoe Meadow in the company of Traver Smith and another knickerbockered investigator, he was able to smile at the episode of the driveway.

"Merely a childish freak on dear little Ruth's part," he soliloquized, sitting down on a grassy hummock. "But if that pork-packer thinks Miss Ware is sincerely in love with him, all I can say is— Here, Traver, stop that!"

The youthful Smith was cheerily batting his brother scientist with a tin botany-box. This assault having been terminated, the boys searched for flowers; and Minthorn leaned back on his elbow and lit a pipe.

The meadow was a pleasant place, fringed by thick woods and bathed with sunlight. Minthorn dozed; the distant voices of the botanists mingled with the sleepy drone of grasshoppers. But soon he was aware of another note. He raised himself drowsily. A mauve dress was now visibly near the stocky figure of Traver Smith.

Clement gasped and crouched down again. The sight was almost beyond belief. What sort of a girl was this who threw herself at the head of a defenseless school-teacher? Unreasoning panic seized him. Measuring with a desperate eye the space to the concealment of the trees, he reflected upon the chance of present escape. Then he began to crawl idiotically through the grass.

At the edge of the grove he was arrested by the faint sound of his name. He peered through the woods and discovered Ruth Kerrington stationed, tearful, on a fallen pine where there was room for two.

"Oh, Clem!" she sobbed softly. "I'm a nasty eavesdropper! I followed her—I couldn't help it. I knew that she was going to meet you when she made that excuse about walking to the post-office. Clem, are you beginning to love her as she loves you?"

"No, by Heaven!" denied Minthorn with impious emphasis.

"Hush! I don't believe you!"

"You've got to."

"Then make me," invited Miss Kerrington in a grief-swept whisper. "Hildegarde never would act like this unless she was crazy—made crazy by—by—oh, why is it all so awful? Do you think I can be engaged to a man who makes an appointment after only a day's acquaintance, with a horrid girl in a horrid meadow?"

"My dear Ruth!"

"But I caught you at it. I saw you pointing out this very place for her with her parasol and squeezing her hand—Mr. Minthorn!"

"Please don't be a goose!" said he, growing angry.

"A what?" demanded Ruth icily.

Whereupon she perched herself on a frigid peak of scorn, quite inaccessible and terrifyingly novel to Clement; and his futile attempts to entice her from it only made matters worse. His own temper slipped away from him, and the pine log, after fifteen minutes, became the dismal stage of tragedy.

Suddenly a touring-car with a single passenger halted in the road behind them.

"Howdy!" called the passenger, who was a middle-aged man with a jolly face. "Can you tell me where Canoe Meadow is? Down at the school they reckoned I'd find the boss teacher up here with a kid of mine."

"I—I'm the teacher," said Clement in a voice still broken by the tragedy.

"Are you?" shouted the burly stranger, jumping down. "You're Minthorn, are you? Well, my name's Smith—Traver Smith, of Chicago. Howdy!" He pumped Minthorn's hand and beamed upon the melancholy visage of Miss Kerrington. "Another teacher, maybe?" he hinted.

Clement introduced him briefly.

"Excuse *me*," apologized Mr. Smith. "You see, Minthorn, I think a heap of your plant, now that I've looked it over, and I want to know all about it. I was making a little run to New York, and I'm right pleased I stopped. Where's Traver, Jr.? You've done a lot, Minthorn, for that young Indian, and I'm going to show you I appreciate it. I'd rather give money to a school than a library. Kind of a tough proposition, that kid, isn't he? But there—you take a motherless boy, with a fool father, busy selling pork, and what can you expect? Where is he?"

As if in answer to the inquiry, a charming picture slowly presented itself under a leafy arch at the bend of the road. The picture consisted of Miss Hildegarde Ware with her arm flung over the evidently receptive shoulders of Traver junior. The other botanist trailed doubtfully in the rear.

"Hilda!" yelled Traver senior. "Why didn't you write? How in the—"

He bit his lip and grinned sheepishly at Minthorn.

"Guess I pulled off a rotten break," muttered the millionaire.

But Miss Ware, too, was so astonished that she broke down the conventions without a pause.

"Trave!" she responded, and dashed forward. "I've had my wish, in spite of you! I've made friends with the child before he knew who I was!"

"Clem darling, that man must be her widower," breathed Ruth into Minthorn's ear.

V

It was while they were all on the way back in the car that Hildegarde made her confession.

"It's going to be announced pretty soon, anyhow," she began, with an affectionate glance at Mr. Smith.

"And we're so glad," put in Miss Kerrington shamelessly. "Aren't we, Clement?"

"So your invitation here seemed providential, Ruth," continued Miss Ware. "Because I was simply bound to have Traver's boy meet me and like me before he knew that I was to be his—his—"

"Right-o!" chuckled Smith. "And, thanks to Minthorn, he's getting to be a fine boy, the red-headed monkey!"

"Let us hope he'll always leave buzz-saws alone," laughed Clement; but Ruth abruptly called attention to the view.

MORNING ON A MOUNTAIN

The day shot up like a thousand spears
Of glittering, blinding gold and red;
The sound of the wind was in my ears,
And the wine of it in my head.

I looked where the long horizon gleamed,
Broken and torn by jets of fire;
I looked where the far-off river steamed,
In the gloom of a mountain's spire.

And I bowed my head, as men have bowed
At such a time, since time began;
Humbled, and yet made fiercely proud
To live, and be a man!

Allan Updegraff

WARD'S HAND-PICKED MILLIONS

BY FREDERICK COURTENAY BARBER

THE man who can make two blades of grass grow where one grew before has had his share of praise. What about a man who can make millions of dollars grow in a place formerly occupied by an aching void?

This is not the place for the ungentle reader to rear back in the traces. He need not snort with alarm in the fear that he has stacked up against a get-rich-quick prospector. The millions that are made to fill the aforesaid hollow pang are not expended in Newport villas, turbine yachts, or ninety-horse-power French cars. They are devoted to spreading the propaganda of right living of which the familiar initials Y. M. C. A. are the hall-mark. They are invested in association buildings and their equipment; in the home and foreign work of the organization, and in hundreds of other worthy ways that pay big dividends in brain and brawn.

The grower of millions who is the subject of this sketch is the most industrious financial farmer in the world.

He sows the soil of necessity with the seed of genius, waters it from the springs of energy, warms it with the sunshine of good humor, and reaps bumper crops that would make the eyes of Wall Street bulge. When it comes to raising millions for the Young Men's Christian Association, he is a charter member of the Peep-O'-Day Grange, the Wide-Awake League, the Noontide Toilers, and the Sunset Round-Up Ranch—all these and then some. Not only can he make a million grow where nothing better than a bonded debt flourished before, but he can turn a pallid deficit into the rosiest surplus you ever saw.

Charles Sumner Ward is rightly called the champion money-raiser of the world. He has raised for the Y. M. C. A. twenty-three million dollars in eight years. He has conducted between eighty and eighty-five whirlwind campaigns in that space of time and he isn't any chestier about it than he would be if he had never done anything bigger than sell pink church-fair tickets to pale people. One would expect such a wizard of wealth-welding to refer to his achievements now and then — not vaingloriously, of course, but in a casual way, as if he should say patronizingly: "Any time you want a little matter of twenty-three millions, come to me for an hour a day."

Not so Charles Sumner Ward. Being so persistently and successfully "the goods," he might be pardoned if he were to add a few frills of fancy to his wonderful fabric of fact. But he does nothing of the sort. The nearest he comes to fourflushing is to live in Flushing, Long Island.

Mr. Ward receives no compensation from the association branches he serves in this way. His salary is paid by the international committee and is moderate. There is no percentage arrangement.

Mr. Ward acquired the money-raising habit at a time when the association, owing to a newly developed policy of expansion, needed funds badly. He started in a modest way, raising seventy-five thousand dollars for the Y. M. C. A. of Minneapolis, where he at that time was general secretary.

"Aha!" said the international committee. "Here is the man we have been seeking! We can always find a satisfactory general secretary for any city, but this man knows how to string the sinews of war in a way to tauten up the work of the association all over the world." Whereupon they tore Mr. Ward from shrieking Minneapolis and made him the official fiscal agriculturalist of the international organization.

The work of such a man, of course, is not wasted on the ordinary necessities of the association finances. In every city, town, and village there are volunteer workers as well as paid officers of the

Y. M. C. A. who know how to obtain contributions for the routine, year-to-year needs of the local branches. It is when a really large amount becomes necessary to the development of the association's plant and plans in any part of the world that the international committeemen turn to one another with smiles of confidence and say: "Let Ward do it."

Mr. Ward's methods are as simple as their results are gigantic. All you have to do if you wish him to raise money for the Y. M. C. A. is to show him the town and tell him how much is needed. From that moment that town is doomed to give up the amount which the local Y. M. C. A. requires. It may as well stand and deliver at the outset as to waste time in paltering. It has no more chance to avoid giving the million or more which Mr. Ward has decided to raise there than a man in a dentist's chair, with laughing-gas in his lungs and a rubber plug between his teeth, has to retain the molar which the operator thinks ought to come out. When it comes to getting a million or so Mr. Ward is absolutely sure to extract it—without pain, of course, but none the less surely.

But, although the town must give up its million to the association when the financial farmer of the international committee gets busy, it does not lose the money. At the same time that Mr. Ward induces it to finance its local branch or branches he enriches that town. The fine, though intensely practical, structures put up by the Y. M. C. A. with the funds contributed to it in one of Mr. Ward's building campaigns are visible assets to the town itself—and the returns paid in clean manhood and good citizenship yield a generous profit to the community on its home investment.

SECTION-GANGS OF MILLIONAIRES

It is almost always to raise money for new Y. M. C. A. buildings that Mr. Ward is active. Whenever he starts a campaign it is with some such definite object. He doesn't mince matters with a municipality. He goes right into that city or town, tells the big men of the place what he wants, and proceeds to secure it. One of the first things he does in carrying out his plan is to get the really important men of the town working for the cause. Long before the middle of the campaign he has them hard at it with their coats off and their sleeves rolled up.

It is delightful to a disinterested observer to see section-gangs of millionaires toiling under Mr. Ward's directions to pile up a million or more for the association and to note that they strive far more anxiously to raise that million than they would to stack up ten times as much money for themselves. Bankers, brokers, and high financiers may get their own millions easily, but the millions they get for Mr. Ward are amassed by genuine hard work. Mr. Ward would no more dream of sparing a panting millionaire than he would of making things easy for himself. Other men sow the wind and raise the whirlwind. Pikers! Charles Sumner Ward sows a whole sheaf of whirlwinds and raises cyclones of wealth.

A few of the crossroads and tank-stations in which this *Merlin* of mounting millions has raised building funds for the association are New York, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, London, Edinburgh, Omaha, Toronto, Denver, Chicago, Ottawa, Montreal, Erie, Winnipeg, Cleveland, and Birmingham. He has operated in Kansas City, Boston, Washington, Baltimore, Rochester, and Richmond.

His greatest *coup* was in New York, where he was recently called upon to raise the astounding sum of four million dollars for the Young Women's and Young Men's Christian Associations in two weeks. Ward showed his fitness for the job by placing George W. Perkins at the head of this whirlwind assault on the pocketbook. It seemed an impossibility that all this money could be dug out of the public when in so many quarters there were mutterings of hard times. But Perkins has no equal in a campaign of this sort. He has a wide acquaintance with men of great wealth, but above all he is a wonderful organizer and a brilliant and inspiring leader. In exactly fifteen days together they corralled contributions totaling up to $4,052,000.

In spite of his tremendous success, Mr. Ward is the most unassuming of men. Between whirlwinds he basks in the breezes of Flushing Bay. There he has a quiet home in which he recuperates from the tremendous mental and physical strain to which he is subjected when in the heat of a campaign. Builder of millions though he is, he is so thoroughly domesticated that he lets his wife choose his neckties — and greater humility hath no man.

THE EMERALD BROOCH

BY PAUL WEST

WITH A DRAWING (FRONTISPIECE) BY C. D. WILLIAMS

THEY—and in this instance " they " refers to a particularly discriminating class—always declared that one of the chief pleasures of purchasing jewelry at Farquharson's was the fact that it brought them in contact with Thornton.

Farquharson's, as you know, is — well, Farquharson's. It is not a jewelry establishment, but *the* jewelry establishment. It does not sell from its treasure-store; it merely permits you to select in accordance with your station in life, and the money transaction is, apparently, of the very slightest moment. There is no display of diamonds or pearls in its windows facing on the avenue, nor in the show-cases within—no attempt to attract you. Farquharson's takes it for granted that you know, if you are of the select class entitled to its patronage; if you are not, why should it bother with you?

The interior of the great room is plain. Show-cases lined with pearl-gray velvet face the aisles, displaying unobtrusive things. Scarf-pins, bracelets, simple little lavallières, watches, match-boxes — everything conceivable. Were you to inquire the prices of the goods displayed you might think, if you did not know better, that this exposed exhibit represented all that was expensive and elaborate in the way of jewelry.

Oh dear, no! All that you see is nothing. To be sure, some people might imagine that that scarf-pin, a dull gold claw clutching a pearl, priced at a thousand dollars, was a bauble of importance; but they should see the real things—pearls of pedigree, no larger than this one, but perfect in their roundness, similarly made up, and, to the uninitiated, only a trifle more choice. The difference in price might convince them! As for the tiaras, necklaces, rings, brooches, and pins that constitute the actual Farquharson stock, they are hidden from common view beneath the rosewood counters.

See them? Of course you may—if you express an inclination to purchase anything of that class, and if Farquharson's thinks you will appreciate them. Otherwise you will come out with the mistaken idea that Farquharson's is not much of a jewelry-store compared to half a dozen others along the avenue, whose windows and show-cases glitter and sparkle.

It is, therefore, a pleasure and a matter for pride to be allowed to see the actual stock in Farquharson's; and one acquires this feeling when waited on by any of the four or five principal gentlemen standing behind the most important show-cases. Theirs is an anomalous position. Men of substance, enjoying salaries greater than those commanded by many men at the head of large business concerns, meeting and associating with a clientele which includes only the representatives of the most exclusive circles in the world, they are nevertheless classed on the Farquharson books as " salesmen."

The eight-a-week counter-jumpers in the department-stores along the avenue are also salesmen. But there is a difference.

There was even a difference between Thornton and his associates in Farquharson's. It would have been difficult to point out on the surface, for all were so well-groomed, so polite and unpatronizing. And each knew the methods of Farquharson's so thoroughly. It was only to Farquharson's regular customers — customers whose accounts had been running away into the thousands for years and years, whose collections of jewels had been built up through two generations of dealing with

Farquharson's — that the difference was particularly known. But once known to them, and from that time thenceforth they would as soon have thought of going to any one else in Farquharson's for their jewels as of—well, as of going to another shop!

Thornton did more than sell them jewelry. He selected it for them. He kept pace with the rise of their fortunes. When the head of a house increased his holdings by five or seven millions in some world-moving financial *coup,* Thornton knew that the wife or daughter of the man would soon be in to get that string of pearls which had so attracted her two years previous—and he had it conveniently at hand.

When Mrs. A bought a particularly fine emerald pendant he knew that her closest friend and social rival, Mrs. X, would see it and want one even finer. Therefore he put it where he could easily reach it against her coming in within the fortnight. Thornton knew, and they trusted him and gave him their confidences.

He was standing behind his counter this morning when a woman entered and inquired of an attendant at the big bronze door for Mr. Thornton. She approached him and mentioned his name questioningly. Thornton acknowledged his identity and took the woman in at one shrewd, unnoticeable glance.

She was tall, stylishly dressed, and a lady. He knew the latter fact because she wore no obtrusive jewels, a small pearl pendant with one large gem at her throat being the only apparent ornament. She was perhaps thirty-five, attractive, and not a New Yorker—at least not one of long standing. Had she been, she would have asked him if he were "Mr. Thawnton." She said, plainly, "Thornton." Perhaps an Ohioan; certainly not from the immediate East.

"I would like to present this letter," she said in a soft, low voice. "It is from Mrs. Van Syttart." Thornton noticed that she did not say "Mrs. J. W. Van Syttart," or in any other way indicate that he could by any possibility fail to understand just who she meant. This presupposed, also, her acquaintance with "the" Mrs. Van Syttart and a knowledge that the name conveyed authority.

A little thing like this was half the introduction to Thornton. He read the letter, then, with a predisposition toward the woman. It ran as follows:

DEAR MR. THORNTON:

Please let me present Mrs. Delavan, my dear friend, from Cleveland. She has admired my new emeralds so much that she wishes to see some of the others. Please oblige her, and let her look, particularly, at the one you showed me —the one I nearly bought—with one large, pear-shaped stone and six graded ones in a pendant. I think it was $16,000. I trust you are very well. Convey my best wishes to your charming wife. Sincerely,

MARTHA VAN SYTTART.

"I am glad to meet you, Mrs. Delavan," said Thornton, bowing politely. "Mrs. Van Syttart is well, I trust?"

"Oh, very," replied the lady. "That is, of course, she is very tired after her arduous season, but her little rest at Palm Beach will doubtless bring her back feeling much better. You knew that she went this morning?"

"I recall that she said she was going—but, of course, the plans of a social leader are subject to change—"

"Not Martha Van Syttart's," said Mrs. Delavan laughingly. "I don't suppose that once she makes up her mind anything can change it."

Thornton smiled discreetly. This Mrs. Delavan was sizing up very well. Evidently she knew Mrs. Van Syttart intimately. Of course, the letter of introduction would have indicated that fact, but letters of introduction so often say more than the writer would actually like to say.

"But I know how dreadfully busy you must be, Mr. Thornton," continued Mrs. Delavan, laying her bag, a modest one of black seal with silver trimmings and her monogram, "D. R. D.," or "R. D. D.," upon it, on the glass counter, "and I'm almost ashamed to have come here to-day, because—you saw what Mrs. Van Syttart said about emeralds—and the particular pendant she spoke about is really — I'm afraid I oughtn't to look at it at all."

Thornton smiled as he reached beneath the counter and brought out a small tray in which reposed a gorgeous creation. "This is the one Mrs. Van Syttart meant, I think," said he. "It is really a very fine thing, isn't it?"

Mrs. Delavan gave it a glance and exclaimed rapturously:

"Oh, how gorgeous! How beautiful!"

With her gloved finger she touched it furtively.

"Permit me," said Thornton, taking the pendant from its tray and laying it in her hand.

Now a jewelry salesman of a lower order than the Farquharson type might have gone further than this. Mrs. Delavan might or might not be a woman of sufficient wealth to purchase this article, though in all probability she had money or she would not be so well acquainted with Martha Van Syttart as to bring a letter of introduction from her. To be sure, she had declared the utter uselessness of her looking at so costly a jewel; but that meant nothing. There remained, at any rate, a possibility of her buying it. If she could see it on herself the temptation would be increased. But that was raw salesmanship—they do not do things like that in Farquharson's. No, Thornton merely let her hold it in her gloved hand and bask in its refulgent green beauty.

"This really is a more exquisite thing than Mrs. Van Syttart's," she said. Evidently she did not know that Mrs. Van Syttart's pendant, while not so showy, cost five thousand dollars more than this one. But, then, Mrs. Van Syttart was always discreet.

"The stones are larger," Thornton explained, "and the big one is particularly brilliant. It makes a most attractive pendant, doesn't it?"

"It's wonderful!" said Mrs. Delavan, but she sighed, and Thornton could interpret sighs. This was quite a final sigh, meaning: "I'd like to, but I simply can't!" He took the next step.

"The gold settings are equally attractive, I think," said he; "in fact, we consider them sometimes better for emeralds than the platinum. Here are some in gold."

He produced another tray. Its contents also were emeralds—pendants, two brooches, and a necklace. Mrs. Delavan's eyes were instantly attracted to the new lot, but she held the first pendant still in her hand. Thornton made no attempt to relieve her of it.

He knew that Higgins, the detective, was watching from his post by the door, and that Quayle, eight feet farther along behind the same counter, could see out of the corner of his eye everything that was happening. Besides, in Farquharson's they treat all patrons on the supposition that every one is honest.

"This Oriental setting in dull-green gold is rather odd," he said, fondling another pendant. "Its effect, too, is to make this stone seem quite as large as the one in that first pendant."

"That's so," agreed Mrs. Delavan. "But somehow"—as she returned the pendant which she had been holding to him, and took the second one—"if you hadn't shown me this beauty first—oh, dear!" she added with a petulant smile, "why is it that everything in the world has to suffer from comparison with something else finer? If I had seen this first I know that I should have been quite content with it, especially since it is probably much nearer what I could afford to spend. How much is it, by the way?"

Thornton consulted the little tag affixed to the pendant. "Seven thousand dollars," he said.

Mrs. Delavan uttered a little exclamation, like a whistle, and dabbed her lips with the handkerchief she had just taken from her hand-bag.

"It is a dreadful temptation," she said. "But when one is responsible only to oneself for one's expenditures, one sometimes becomes overthoughtful in such cases."

What would you have made of this? To Thornton it indicated that she was a widow enjoying an income of which she was sole mistress. But if she were a widow, her lack of mourning and her ability to wear jewels indicated that her loss had not been of recent occurrence.

"Of course," he said, "you are the sole judge, Mrs. Delavan. Perhaps, if you merely wish to add a fine emerald to your jewel collection, a single one, in a brooch, for instance, would serve the purpose. Then, if, at some future time, you felt like having it elaborated into a pendant, we could, of course, add as many stones as necessary. That is often done."

Suddenly you would have noted, if you had known Thornton very well, that he flushed. There was no change in the tone of voice with which he spoke, no dulling of the pleasant smile accompanying his words, and not the slightest pause in what he said. But his whole frame seemed to tighten up. Something had happened.

There had been two brooches in the tray which he had placed on the counter. Now, as he was about to indicate them to Mrs. Delavan, he saw that there was only one. And the missing one—a single stone—was worth five thousand dollars!

On such occasions the cool head works miracles in the way of organizing its thoughts, and Thornton was never cooler than at this moment. In the fraction of a second he arranged the situation.

There had been, two minutes ago, two brooches in the tray. There was absolutely no possibility of a mistake in this. Had Quayle taken one of the brooches out previously he would have put in its place a round "check," an ivory disk colored pink, since this was Tuesday. For Quayle or any of the experienced men behind that counter to be guilty of not obeying this rule of Farquharson's would be impossible. Besides, Thornton remembered seeing both the brooches in the tray.

The brooch was gone. There were only two ways of its having disappeared. His sleeve might have caught it and dropped it behind the counter, or Mrs. Delavan might have knocked it off on her side. Unless—unless she had stolen it.

Thornton, in his twenty years at Farquharson's, had been the custodian of many millions of dollars' worth of precious stones, and in that time he had never lost one dollar's worth. Nor had a customer ever even tried to rob him. In fact, within that period there had been not over four or five attempts at theft in the establishment. One of these had occurred during the previous year, when a woman had palmed a ring worth a few hundred dollars and hidden it in her muff.

Doremus, the salesman, being absolutely positive of this, had requested her to accompany him to the office, where she had been searched and the ring discovered. They had made no attempt to punish her, assuring her that they were convinced that the whole affair was nothing but an accident—the ring must have attached itself to the lace of her sleeve, they explained. And, after they had bowed her out apologetically, old Farquharson had raked Doremus over the coals for his lack of tact in the occurrence.

"But I was very careful, sir, not to give the lady any hint that I thought she could have stolen the ring," persisted Doremus. "I convinced her that I thought the whole thing was an accident."

"I know, I know," old Farquharson had said. "I do not wish to criticise you harshly, sir; but your method was—er—a dangerous one. It verged closely on an insult to the lady."

"But, great Scott! Mr. Farquharson, I saw her take it. I would have been justified in demanding her arrest!"

The old man, according to Doremus, had "hit the ceiling."

"Arrest!" he had gasped. "An arrest in Farquharson's! Mr. Doremus, let me impress this upon your mind! There has never been an arrest in this establishment! There never shall be. Better that a thief should steal our entire stock than that we should be forced to admit that such a thing could ever take place inside our doors! Remember that, sir!"

Such was the spirit of Farquharson's.

Well, all this flashed through Thornton's mind as, in a fleeting instant, he realized the situation. If Mrs. Delavan had taken the brooch it must, of course, be recovered from her, if possible. But diplomatically. Not only the spirit of Farquharson's demanded this in the case of any customer, but how much more so when the lady had come bearing a letter of introduction from Mrs. Van Syttart!

To offend, by any possible chance, a friend of Mrs Van Syttart's, a woman vouched for by the leader of society—was an unthinkable case. Imagine the feelings of Mrs. Van Syttart, called into such an affair! Suddenly it occurred to Thornton that perhaps the letter of introduction was a forgery. Suppose it was—all the more reason that the thing should be managed carefully and silently. Mrs. Van Syttart surely would not relish having a story like that in the papers!

Yet he must act, and act quickly. The spirit of Farquharson's demanded that he should make no move which could by any possibility cause an instant's unpleasantness. But deeper in Thornton than the Farquharson spirit was his own. He was going to get that brooch!

Mind you, he underwent this mental process in a few seconds. During it all he continued to converse with Mrs. Delavan, who, if she had the slightest suspicion that anything was wrong, gave no indication.

"I am afraid you have too elaborate an opinion of my jewel collection," she laughed, gazing fondly at the large emerald which she now held in her glove. "Beyond a few diamonds and a very,

very few pearls, I possess scarcely anything. An emerald like this one would completely overshadow the rest of my trinkets. It — it would be almost too beautiful. Haven't you some smaller ones?"

"Oh, yes," said Thornton. "I will show you some."

He turned away from her for a moment, but as he did so his eye lingered on her hand-bag, resting on the counter at some distance from her elbow. It was still open after she had taken the handkerchief from it. If she had the brooch, it was in there. She could not have secreted it in her clothing, he felt sure, for her hands had at no time left the counter. As he stooped beneath the latter, a few feet nearer Quayle, he continued to look out through the glass at the woman.

She should not, if she had the emerald, take advantage of this momentary chance to hide the brooch where it would be more difficult to find it. And at the same time Thornton spoke quickly to Quayle.

"Emerald brooch — Roman gold setting!" he said between his teeth.

Quayle guessed.

"Out on check?" he replied.

"No. There when I took the tray out."

"Floor?"

"Don't think so. But you look. Tell Higgins look on floor in the aisle. Watch woman."

Thornton took another tray from beneath the counter and carried it to Mrs. Delavan. Two minutes, perhaps, had passed since he had left her. Her hands, in the mean time, had rested on the top of the glass counter—he could swear to that. If the emerald had been still in her bag when he left her, it was there now. Her two hands were fondling the second brooch.

He laid the last tray, containing smaller emeralds, before her, and began to show them to her. As he did so, Quayle walked behind him, casting a quick but careful look at the floor, and passing to the farther side of the counter. At the same instant a signal must have passed between him and Higgins, for the detective left his post near the door and sauntered around back of Thornton in the next aisle. A word from Quayle and Higgins retraced his steps, passing behind Mrs. Delavan and darting a sweeping glance at the marble floor. A scarcely perceptible shake of his head told Thornton what he already knew—the emerald was not on the floor.

"I know it's unreasonable," said Mrs. Delavan finally; "but I simply could not be satisfied with any of these, beautiful as they are, Mr. Thornton. It's always that way with me—if I see something very beautiful first I can't set my mind on anything else."

"That is frequently the case," agreed Thornton. "But from Mrs. Van Syttart's note—"

"Oh, it was my fault," she interrupted. "I did want to see that beautiful thing she raved about so. But don't think that I have taken all your time for nothing. I shall be in New York for several days yet, and perhaps by to-morrow I'll have become reasonable and made up my mind that I shall have to take one of these smaller necklaces. For I'm not going home without some emeralds, if I can help it. Only, if I come in to-morrow, please hide the big ones, won't you, or it will be the same thing all over again?"

She laughed, and tucked her handkerchief into the seal-leather hand-bag on the counter, catching it with the silver clasp. Thornton would have given his Christmas commissions to look into the interior.

"It has been no trouble at all," said he, "and you need not think that you must hurry in deciding. We have many more emeralds, and if you would like to see them at any time— You are not living here?"

"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Delavan. "I am stopping at the St. Midas. But I know it has been trouble, Mr. Thornton, and I am really ashamed of my weakness in letting you show me those beautiful things when I knew I could not think of buying them. And I do mean to come in again. Thank you so much!" She put out her hand frankly, and he took it. She held her bag in the other hand. "I shall write to Mrs. Van Syttart to-night and tell her how kindly you treated me. Good morning!"

He saw her turn away from the counter and move toward the door. With her, he knew, went a five-thousand-dollar bauble for which he was solely responsible. He saw Higgins cast an inquiring glance at him as she passed out through the bronze door, but he did not tell the detective to follow her. Instead, he thrust his hand beneath the counter and, from the receptacle made for holding it, caught up his hat.

He hurried around to the opening at the end of the counter and walked briskly to the door, all the while keeping his eye upon the woman, who was by this time just standing at the curb, waiting for the traffic to allow her to cross the avenue.

" Follow me," he said, as he passed Higgins. " She's got a five-thousand-dollar stone, and I'm going to get it!"

The woman crossed the avenue and turned south. Thornton, with Higgins ten paces in his rear, was fifty feet behind her in the crowd. He did not know what he was going to do—there was only one idea in his mind, and that was that she had the emerald, and he wanted it.

As he proceeded along the avenue, however, the idea worked itself out a little further. She was headed for the St. Midas, two blocks down, and if she went there he would make inquiries about her of the clerk. He would see her in person; would let her know—not by accusation, but by carefully worded hints — that he knew all. He would prevail on her to surrender the stone.

He would communciate with Mrs. Van Syttart by telegraph and find out if she really knew the woman. No, he could not do that without letting Mrs. Van Syttart know that something was suspected — if the letter were genuine — perhaps Mrs. Delavan was a kleptomaniac! Perhaps—

As he approached the corner the crowd became very thick. In fact, the avenue was unusually crowded even for the avenue, and Thornton noted that something unusual was going on. The strains of a brass band smote his ears—a parade was coming, which accounted for the throngs. But he had no time for parades.

He looked over the mob ahead of him and could see Mrs. Delavan, caught in the crush and slowly edging her way to the crossing. She had gained on him a little, however, and he flung himself into the press to make up the lost distance.

It was just then that Thornton felt a hand in his pocket—the pocket where his watch reposed at the end of a fob. It did not occur to him for an instant that his pocket was being picked; but suddenly the fact dawned on him. He caught at the hand, and his fingers clasped about a slim, wriggling wrist.

" Lemme go!" a voice gurgled in his ear, and another, which he recognized as Higgins's, added:

" I got him, Mr. Thornton!"

" It's all right, Higgins," said Thornton, his eyes steadfastly cast ahead, toward the crossing where Mrs. Delavan was still being held up by the traffic.

In his ears dinned the blare of the band—and the pleading of the captive at his side, whose wrist he still held in a clinching grasp, while the detective clutched the squirming shoulders. And then—perhaps the music of the band did it, perhaps the suggestion conveyed by the touch of the wriggling wrist—he had an idea.

" Shut up!" he whispered to the captive at his side. " You're just in time! Let him go, Higgins!"

Higgins, wonderingly, released the fellow, who immediately tried to run; but Thornton's grip on his wrist brought him up standing.

" Stop!" he commanded. " Come here!" He dragged the man, a small, weak creature with drawn face and sparse frame, through the crowd.

" See that woman?" he demanded, pointing with his free hand at Mrs. Delavan. " The one with the three big white feathers in her hat? She's got a big emerald in her hand-bag. I've been after it, but I can't get it. You go after it. Understand? You go get it!"

" Get it yourself," growled the pickpocket. " What are you lugging me into it for? Is it a stall?"

" I — she's on to me," said Thornton. " She's spotted me. But it's all right for you."

" You go to—" began the crook; but Thornton's grasp closed about his wrist in a manner that made him wince. " If this is a job," he said, " why don't you—"

" Go to it!" demanded Thornton. " Quick! Before she crosses the street!" He shoved the crouching figure ahead of him. Urged on by the impulse, attracted by the sight of the hand-bag which hung invitingly in view, his hand stole forward, and his eyes lighted up with the instinct of his craft. Thornton was at his heels, watching every move.

Through the crush at the curb pushed a police officer. The pickpocket did not see him, but Thornton did, and, scenting a possible interference with his plans, he interposed himself between the cop and the crook, skilfully as the most experienced " stall " would have done it. The policeman, not seeing him, came against Thornton, whose brawny shoulder caught the impact and pushed the officer backward.

" Say, you!" demanded the guardian of the peace.

" I beg your pardon," said Thornton. The officer elbowed himself into the mass, glowering back over his shoulder at Thornton. And at this moment it all happened.

The deft, lean fingers had unclasped the catch of Mrs. Delavan's bag; there was a swift dip, and the fingers emerged holding a glittering jewel. Thornton stepped forward, the hand passed the emerald to his waiting fingers, the pickpocket ducked into the crowd, and Thornton dived into the throng at the curb. From somewhere behind him he heard a muffled shout of " Stop thief!" There were the cries of startled women, there was a general mix-up, and he thought he heard Higgins's voice shouting: " It's all right, all right."

Thornton ducked across the line of parade, narrowly missing collision with a bass drum, the shrieks of brass instruments deafening his ears. He gained the opposite sidewalk in a few bounds and saw the stone pillars of Farquharson's just above him to the left. An officer, as he fought his way through the fringe of onlookers, would have pushed him back into the street, but he was too quick for him and gained the sidewalk.

His foot was raised to press the lower step of the entrance to Farquharson's when he felt a touch on his elbow and turned to see his friend, the pickpocket.

" Nix on the getaway, cul," he heard huskily pleaded. " The fair divvy, or I'll—"

Thornton did not like to be so cruel, but the exigencies of the situation precluded argument. Of course, being the front entrance to Farquharson's, the scene lacked the action that it might have had if it had taken place in a more remote " locale." But it was sufficiently dramatic; at least to the pickpocket, who, as he picked himself from the gutter, with a numb ache at his jaw, wondered exactly what had happened. The appearance of a policeman made him decide that it would be better to contemplate the events of the last few minutes from a side street, to which he hastily betook himself.

Higgins, returning to Farquharson's five minutes later, after having satisfactorily arranged it with the police officer at the corner so that Thornton's precipitate flight through the crowd had not resulted in his pursuit (and a possible scene in front of Farquharson's, or, worse still, inside the doors), looked for Thornton.

The latter was standing behind his counter, showing some pearls to Mrs. J. W. Coleman, wife of the copper king. So Higgins had to wait. When he finally found the chance of speaking to Thornton, he said:

" Where did you learn to stall?"

" To what?" asked Thornton, puzzled.

" To block the mob—the way you got in front of that copper."

" Oh," said Thornton. " You see, it seemed to be necessary—he might have interfered, and I thought—by the way, I heard a cry of ' Stop thief!' as I came back to the shop. Did the lady—"

" That was me," said Higgins. " I had to do it to cover things while I closed her hand-bag, which the dip forgot, and to hide your raw getaway. Next time, do it slower, so nobody'll suspect anything."

" Oh, she discovered—"

" Nothing. She doesn't know yet, either, unless — say, where's she living? If it's a hotel they ought to be put wise to her, or—"

" Hardly that," said Thornton. " Excuse me, old man, I've got to telephone."

He went into one of the booths at the end of the store and called the St. Midas, asking to speak to " Mrs. Delavan, of Cleveland."

A soft, feminine voice replied.

" This," he said, " is Mr. Thornton, of Farquharson's."

" Oh—yes?" came the reply, questioningly, and followed by a pause.

" I thought I would call you up," he said, " Mrs. Delavan, to tell you that we have another beautiful emerald brooch which might please you when you come in to-morrow. I intended showing it to you, but it must have been mislaid somewhere, because it could not be found for a short while."

" Oh, I see. And—"

" But it is here now," he went on, " having just been returned to its proper place in the tray."

" I am so glad," came the voice, softly, sweetly. " But I do not think I shall be in to-morrow. I find that I shall have to leave town at once. I shall, however, speak of your kindness to Mrs. Van Syttart—"

"I should not bother," said Thornton pleasantly, "to seek to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Van Syttart, who will have no further connection with the matter, I assure you."

"Make her acquaintance!" The exclamation smacked a little of anger and outraged dignity. "Then you actually think—"

"I don't think; I know," said Thornton. "Mrs. Van Syttart did not write the letter you refer to. Would you like to know how I know?"

There was quite a pause, as though the woman at the other end of the wire was disputing the advisability of pressing the matter further. But her feminine curiosity forced her to demand an explanation, and finally she asked:

"Yes—how?"

"Because," said Thornton, "a friend of Mrs. Van Syttart's, entitled to so cordial and intimate a letter of introduction, would never so far forget her position in society as to shake hands with a mere jewelry salesman! Good-by, Mrs. Delavan!"

IN RETROSPECT

The sunlight filters through the smoke and dust
And warms my sixteenth-story window-pane
Where, seated at my desk, I plan a trust
Or how to break one, which to me's the same;
It warms me and I dream of home again
The way it looked when early spring first showed
In golden buttercups along the road.

I see the fence—its tumbled-down zigzag
Is all alive with little folks at play;
Beneath it ground-squirrels run at hide and tag,
While from its top the lark pours forth her lay,
Along its rails the lazy lizards stay;
And I am trailing with untroubled brow
The vagrant wanderings of our speckled cow.

O spring! you are a rapture to the boy,
And oh, the gipsy wanderings you provoke!
I now recall with what a truant joy
I pulled the angleworm until he broke
And waited at the pond with stone to soak
The frog when he should swell his throat to sing
The universal madness of the spring.

Oft, while along the budding lane I've trod
Barefoot and bathed in April's golden sun,
I've watched my father break the stubborn sod
In fragrant, rippling furrows, one by one—
But soon, too soon, those happy days were done,
For I grew up and had to guide that share,
And so I'm glad, this spring, that I'm not there!

Ralph Bacon

SOME LEADING CAVE MEN

HEROES OF THE CURRENT DRAMA ARE NO LONGER POLITE, BUT HAVE BECOME ROUGH, RUDE, AND PRIMITIVE

BY BURNS MANTLE

ENTER: The cave man!

The popular hero of the current drama is no longer a polite youth, but a rough-and-ready, not to say rude, young male person set on dealing with the feminist movement in his own way. As a coming event that casts its shadow before he bulks large.

In a way, he appears to reflect the answer of masculine America to the ladies who would rule. "We are," says he, in effect, "your traditional masters. We prefer to rule by the gentle arts of love, but we are brutes at heart, and if, by your defiance, you arouse us, you must be prepared to take the consequences."

Poor, simple, optimistic echo of a cave man! As though he ever had really ruled or ever could rule his womenfolk! He can't even understand them.

But however that may be, in no less than three of the plays recently presented in New York the hero has deliberately kidnaped the heroine, carried her away with him, and forced her finally to admire him for the very brutalities of his prehistoric methods. Only the stone hatchet and the hole in the hillside have been lacking to complete the picture.

First, there is Somerset Maugham's "The Land of Promise," in which Miss Billie Burke's young man is a determined *Petruchio* of the Northwest, who by brute force compels her to do his bidding.

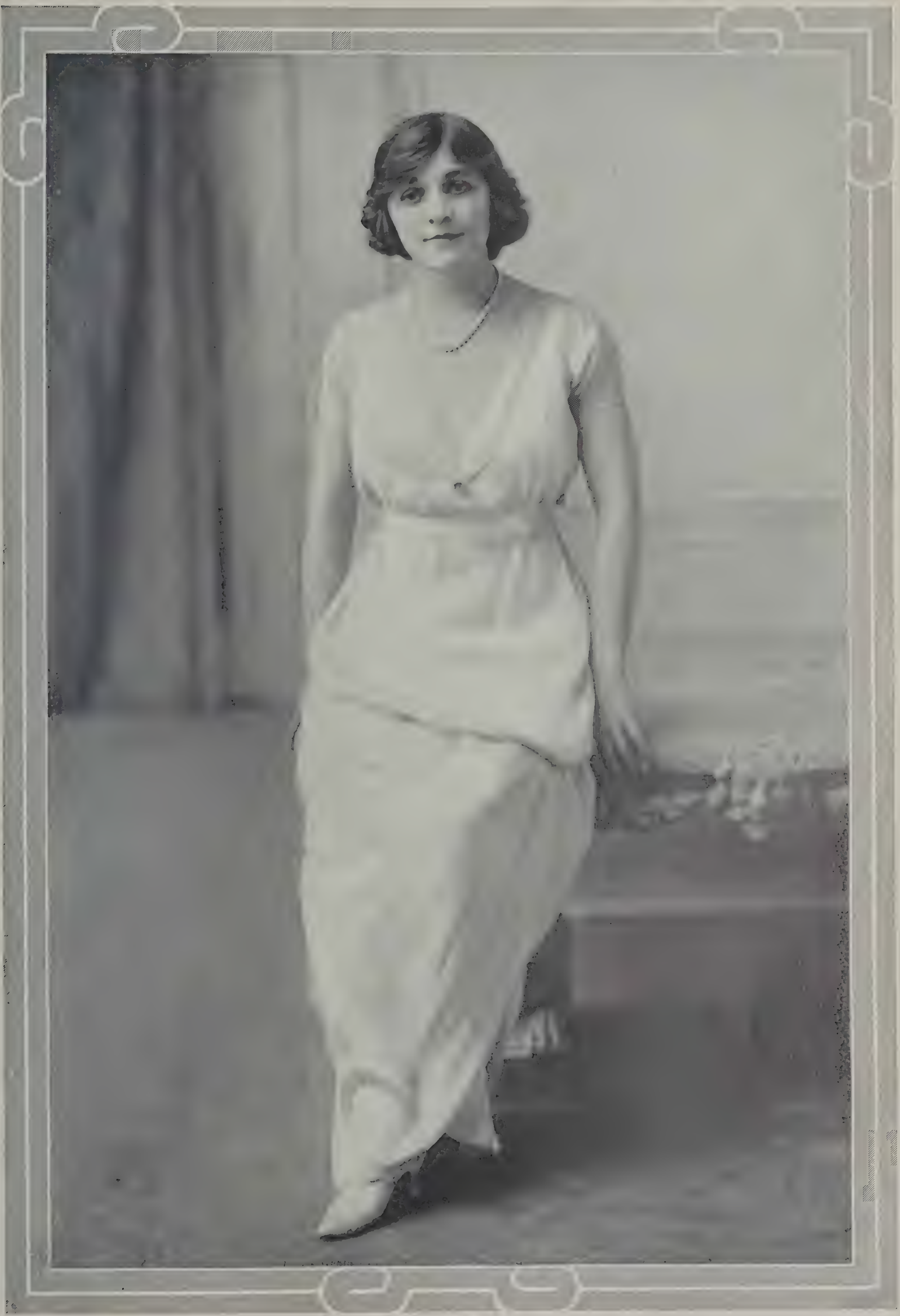
Second, Charles Goddard and Paul Dickey's "The Misleading Lady," in which an iron-willed young horse-tamer, accepting the challenge of a typical coquette, rushes away with her to his hunting-lodge in the Adirondacks and calmly fastens her to the wall with a dog-chain to prevent her escape.

Third, Rachel Crothers's "Young Wisdom," in which the handsome brute who represents the corrective force of the drama bravely picks Miss Edith Taliaferro up in his arms and carries her home to her mother and father to prevent her eloping with a youthful *fiancé* with whom, as a trial husband, she is determined to experiment.

The new fashion in heroes has even spread to the musical farces. In "The Whirl of the World," which is the newest of the girl spectacles at the Winter Garden, the young man entrusted with the care of the plot has agreed to ensnare the hearts of thirty maids in thirty days. He does very well until he comes to No. 28, a cold beauty who is indifferent to his flatteries and impervious to his personality. Then he becomes rough, threatens her with a beating, and swears by the war-clubs of his ancestors to win her ere the spot-light pales. Whereupon she becomes as meek as *Priscilla*.

Of the experiences of the three leading cave men noted above, that in which Miss Burke figures is the most interesting. Probably because it is the most unexpected. For years Miss Billie has represented the eternal feminine at her fascinating best. She has twisted her aureole of coppered hair into a hundred beau-catchers and, to change the figure, literally mowed down phalanx after phalanx of stalwart young heroes with the flash of her bewitching eyes.

As befitting such a heroine, and providing a suitable and acceptable mate for so charming a lady, Miss Billie's heroes have always been of the traditional sort, thick of both chest and skull, strong of limb and lung, youthful, eager, flushed with the



DORIS KEANE HAS CREATED A POSITION FOR HERSELF AMONG CONTEMPORARY STARS BY HER EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS AS THE HEROINE OF EDWARD SHELDON'S "ROMANCE," NOW IN ITS SECOND SEASON

From her latest photograph by Moffett, Chicago pink of their physical perfections, and as heroic and manly as the playwright directed.

Comes now Miss Billie in humble black and humble station to face a rough young Canadian farmer who marries her because it is cheaper to provide for a wife than it is to hire a housekeeper, particularly with women as scarce as they are in the Northwest.

Miss Billie does not want to marry this young man, played by Mr. Shelley Hull. She tells him so. She does not love him, she does not admire him, and she does not respect him. But so long as she has come to Canada to be with her brother, and found that she cannot get on with her brother's wife, she had rather undertake the work of caring for a farmer's shack than to return to Winnipeg and seek em-

VIVIAN MARTIN, BECAUSE OF HER FLOWERLIKE BLOND BEAUTY, IS A FAVORITE OF MANAGERS IN SEARCH OF THAT PARTICULAR TYPE OF INGÉNUE. THIS SEASON SHE HAS BEEN PLAYING IN "THE MARRIAGE GAME"

From her latest photograph by White, New York

LADY FORBES-ROBERTSON (GERTRUDE ELLIOTT) HAS BEEN OBLIGED TO FOREGO THE PLEASURE OF MANY SOCIAL AFFAIRS PROPOSED IN HER HONOR ON THE PRESENT FAREWELL TOUR OF HER DISTINGUISHED HUSBAND, SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON. HER STRENGTH MUST BE CONSERVED FOR HER STAGE WORK

From her latest photograph—copyright by Lizzie Caswell Smith, London ployment as a lady's companion or a second girl in some one's home.

Mr. Hull is willing to accept her on these terms. He is about to break in a quarter-section of land, and is quite ready to break in a wife to help him at the same time. If, however, Miss Billie marries him, he says, he will expect her to live up to her part of the bargain. She will be an equal partner in the family firm, and she shall assume her share of the family obligations. To which she assents—with a characteristically feminine reservation in her own mind that she really will do nothing of the kind.

The first clash of wills occurs upon their arrival at the shack. They have driven for hours across the prairie after leaving the train. Their nearest neighbor is several miles away. They are tired and hungry, and Shelley would have his supper. He shows her where the kitchen things are kept and bids her exert herself immediately. She replies that she is accustomed to being asked, not told to do things. He informs her that he will both ask and tell her to do the things he wants done—he will ask her first, and if she does not do as she is asked, he will tell her to do it, and if she does not do it then he will make her do it. It is his purpose and his intention to be master in that particular shack.

Like Shakespeare's *Katherine,* Miss Billie defies this modern *Petruchio.* She will fulfil her contract — she will keep his house and his clothes in order —but more than that she will not do. She will get his supper, because that is in the line of her duty, but after that she is through for the evening. When he tells her to wash the dishes she sends them crashing to the floor to emphasize her contempt for his orders and her defiance of his authority. In response to which Shelley takes his bull-snake whip from the wall and promises her the whipping of her life unless she submits.

Thus is her will broken, and in this spirit does her cave man victoriously, but with an air of apology as well, take the one lamp and retire to the other room, leaving her on her knees before the fire and bidding her not to sit up too long in the cold.

MARGARET ILLINGTON, AFTER TWO SUCCESSFUL SEASONS AS THE HEROINE OF "KINDLING," IS THIS YEAR TOURING THE WEST AS THE UNHAPPY SHOP-GIRL IN "WITHIN THE LAW"

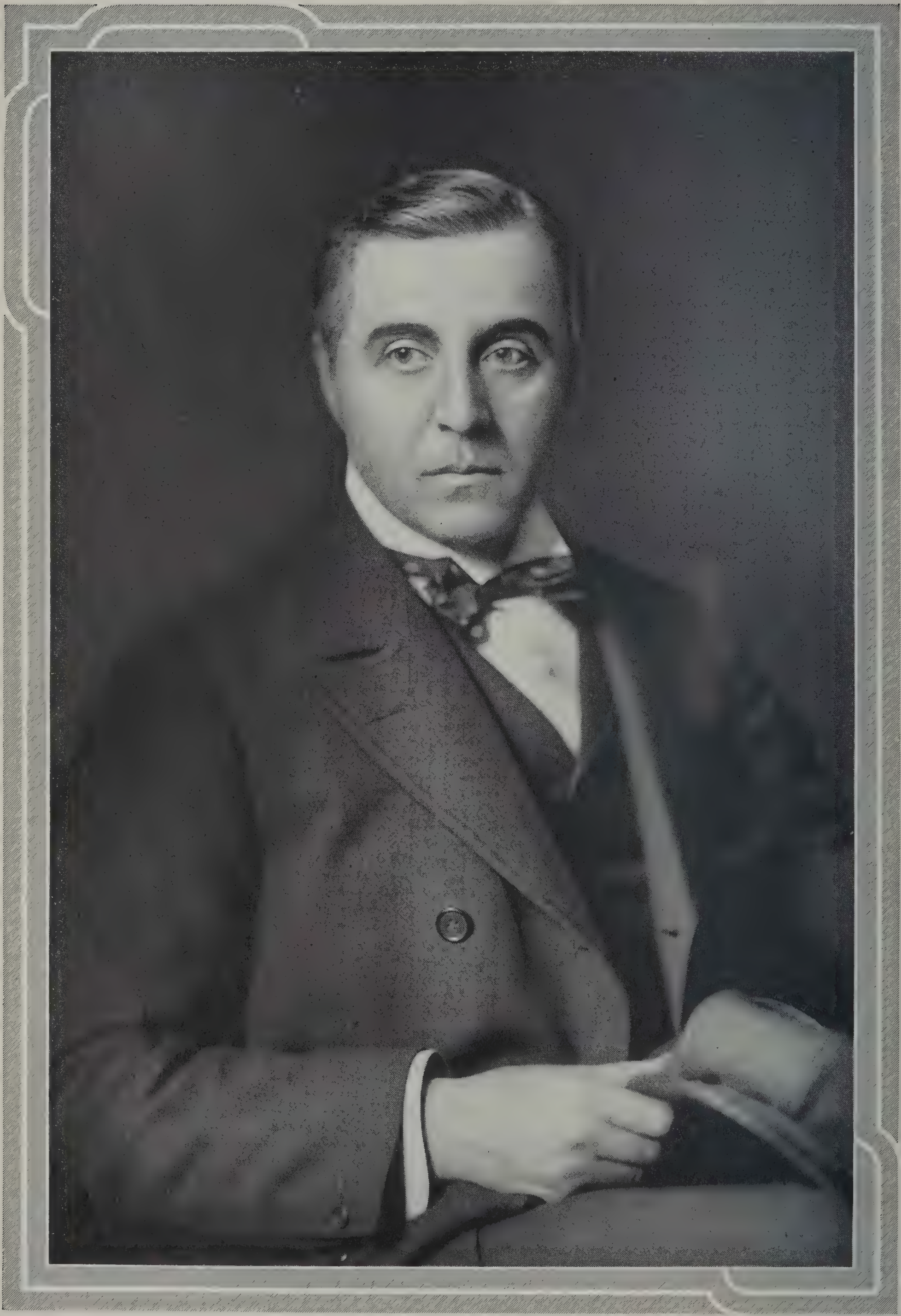
From her latest photograph by Moffett, Chicago

A YEAR AGO JOAN SAWYER QUIT "THE PINK LADY" COMPANY BECAUSE A STAGE-MANAGER TOLD HER SHE COULD NOT DANCE. TO-DAY SHE LEADS THE DANCING AT THE FOLIES-MARIGNY, ATOP THE FORTY-FOURTH STREET THEATER

From a photograph by White, New York

A few months later they have come to know each other better. Miss Billie has made the little shack blossom as brightly as an old-fashioned, sun-soaked garden. There is still anger in her heart, but she has accepted her fate and made the best of it. Mr. Hull, forced to worry about his crop, has ceased to worry about his wife and has softened toward her perceptibly.

Then word comes from England that Miss Billie has come into a small legacy of $2,500 and that she may return to her old position as lady's companion to a maiden lady of means. It is the open door to the complete emancipation for which she has longed. But does she walk through it? Never! The love of the prairies has found lodgment in her heart, where her



E. H. SOTHERN CONTINUES, WITH JULIA MARLOWE-SOTHERN'S ASSISTANCE, TO SPREAD THE SHAKESPEARIAN GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE LAND. HE HAS NO COMPLAINT TO MAKE OF BUSINESS CONDITIONS

From his latest photograph—copyright by Strauss-Peyton, Kansas City

JULIA MARLOWE-SOTHERN APPARENTLY HAS NO DESIRE TO DESERT SHAKESPEARE AND TAKE UP AGAIN A MODERN REPERTOIRE. HER POSITION AS THE BEST JULIET, VIOLA, AND BEATRICE OF OUR STAGE REMAINS UNCHALLENGED

From her latest photograph by Strauss-Peyton, Kansas City cave man has come also to dwell. She elects to stay on in the land of promise and to turn her money over to her strong young husband that he may cease worrying over his crops.

The cave-man hero of "The Misleading Lady" is instinctively a finer type, but equally rough in his method. He meets his charmer (or victim, as you will) at a week-end party. She is attractive and has some ability as an amateur actress. She makes a wager with her friends that she can force a proposal from him before the party breaks up. She succeeds admirably in captivating this wild young wooer within three days, but when the crowd breaks in upon them and finds him at her feet he becomes rather a dangerous individual to handle. Humiliated and hurt beyond his power to control, he starts to leave, and is stopped in the hallway by his tormentor.

She pleads forgiveness. She tries to treat the affair as a joke. His reply is that however much of a joke it may have

FLORENCE MOORE, A GRADUATE OF THE VAUDEVILLE STAGE, IS RAPIDLY MAKING A NAME FOR HERSELF IN MUSICAL COMEDY. SHE WAS A FEATURED MEMBER OF THE COMPANY PRESENTING "THE PLEASURE SEEKERS" THIS SEASON

From her latest photograph

been to her, it was very serious with him, and that if he followed his strongest impulse, it would be to make her pay the penalty she deserved to pay for the things she had done. For three days she had exploited her sex attraction. She had appealed to him by every lure known to the crafty feminine. She had worn audacious frocks and fixed her mind on captivating his senses. A woman who would do that deserves to be punished.

She taunts him with his primitiveness, laughs at him as a modern cave man until she goads him to desperation. Whereupon he throws an overcoat over her head and carries her off to his hunting-lodge. When she attempts to escape he releases his dog and fastens the chain to her ankle.

His mastery of the situation in spite of her every effort to get away turns the play into a riotous farce. But in the end the cave man is as significantly triumphant as though it were a serious drama. The girl finally escapes by knocking her captor down with a telephone standard, but in place of returning to her friends forthwith she scours the neighborhood to find help to bring him back to consciousness, because, womanlike (on the stage at least), she has come to love him for his masterful ways and wants to tell him so.

EDITH TALIAFERRO'S CAVE MAN

In the case of the Taliaferro girls, the subject of their new play, "Young Wisdom," is again that of woman's right to independence. Miss Mabel is "advanced." Miss Edith, her sister in the play as well as out of it, is impressionable. Miss Mabel talks a great deal of woman's right to live her own life, and has much to say of the perfect reasonableness of trial marriages. Miss Edith listens to these partly baked theories of sister's and promptly decides to put them into practise. She forces an elopement on her reluctant *fiancé* in order that they may live together a few months and decide upon their suitability for each other. Greatly excited, sister Mabel commandeers her own beau and follows after, hoping to prevent the harm her too free speech has threatened.

The first stopping-point of the eloping couple is an old farmhouse converted into a studio by a New York artist. Through Edith's halting admissions the artist learns something of her plans and is properly horrified. Edith, however, is determined to go through with the experiment, even after Mabel arrives and adds her entreaties to those of the artist. If trial marriage is a good thing to talk about, it is also a good thing to practise, says she. The others may do as they see fit. She and her now frightened young man will proceed.

To prevent which the artist, with a new love-light in his eyes, promptly puts the cave-man idea into practise by literally picking up the astonished Edith, carrying her out to his automobile, and dashing with her back to her home, followed by the others. This so impresses the young woman that she promptly falls in love with the rough but masterful young painter and releases her first love from his engagement.

Arrived home, and fearing their father's explosive anger, the girls organize a double elopement on the spot and kidnap their mother as a chaperon. Which gives the pleasant little comedy, written by Rachel Crothers, an amusing turn at its close.

SCOTLAND AGAIN TO THE FORE

Those of you who saw "Bunty Pulls the Strings" on its Western tour last season will probably remember Mollie McIntyre, the winsome Scotch lassie who played *Bunty*. This season Miss Mollie is again pleasantly placed in a new Scotch comedy called "Kitty Mac Kay." It is quite as bright as "Bunty," though not so Scotch, having been written in America by Catherine Chisholm Cushing, who last year provided "A Widow By Proxy" for May Irwin.

Mollie is a heroine after the pattern of *Peg* in "Peg o' My Heart"—an orphaned lassie who comes into an inheritance, but is for a time denied the right to wed her sweetheart. She is original, witty, and lovable, and one of her amusing scenes is that in which she conspires with *Mag Duncan*, her chum, to rewrite certain sections of the Bible and thus create a more comfortable religion for the literal-minded Scot. Several changes she has definitely fixed in her mind, but she decides not to tamper with the Garden of Eden story, or the early scandal of the Adamses, on the theory that any book that will sell these days must have something spicy in it.

NO CAVE MAN FOR MAUDE ADAMS

In sharp contrast to the growing popularity of the cave-man hero is the attitude

J. M. Barrie assumes in "The Legend of Leonora." Here all that is most womanly and most impressively feminine in woman is subtly glorified. The tone of the play is satirical and amusing, but the purpose of it is clearly to prove that after all is said and done, it is the old-fashioned, motherly, trusting type of feminine that really inspires the respect and chivalry of men.

In "Leonora" Maude Adams, equally as dainty and fetching to-day as she was fifteen years ago, is a widow and the confessed mother of seven children. For one of the seven she has committed murder and feels no sense of guilt because of that act. It happened thusly: She was riding in a railroad train with her daughter *Millie,* who had a cold, when an inconsiderate fellow passenger raised the car-window. *Millie's* mother asked him to lower it, explaining that her child had a cold. The gentleman, with true British obstinacy, refused, whereupon *Leonora* calmly pushed him off the train and put the window down. The man was killed.

In the second act *Leonora* is brought to trial for this most uncommon crime and promptly begins an effective campaign of subjugation of court and jury. She confers intimately with his lordship, the chief justice. She discusses gardening and the proper rearing of children with the twelve peers who are to pass on her guilt. She defies her own attorneys and insists on telling the jury exactly what happened—that *Millie* had a cold and that she had to push the man off the train exactly as alleged because he refused to close the window.

Every effort is made to prevent her repeating this story. One of the attorneys for the prosecution goes so far as to perjure himself in *Leonora's* behalf. But nothing will stop her. When she is not hopelessly handicapping her own chance of acquittal, she sits calmly in the witness-box knitting socks for her youngest child.

The whole trial scene is deliciously silly, and the wildest of travesties, but a travesty such as only a man of Barrie's whimsical sense of humor could write. In the end the jury files out to consider its verdict and promptly sends back a request to the justice that *Leonora* be permitted to sit with it during its deliberations. Without awaiting his lordship's permission, *Leonora* blithely picks up her bouquet of flowers, the gift of the attorney for the prosecution, and enters the jury-room. A few moments later the twelve good men and true file in again, each wearing a portion of the bouquet. Asked for their verdict, they announce it as their positive conviction that *Leonora* is guiltless. Which does not excite her in the least. She never had expected anything else.

To conclude the proceedings there is a last act, in the nature of an epilogue, in which *Leonora* agrees to marry her principal attorney, a middle-aged retired naval man, not because she loves him, but because he pleads that her children need him.

THE SOTHERN-MARLOWE BIG TAKINGS

On the first tour E. H. Sothern made as a star all that he carried in the way of scenic equipment and properties filled one wardrobe trunk. This year he is traveling in a special train of eleven cars. In a way this suggestion of his material progress is indicative also of his artistic advance. With the invaluable assistance of Julia Marlowe he has come to represent the classic drama on the American stage at its best.

During the thirty-five weeks that the Sothern-Marlowe company plays through the country each season they move from one dramatic festival to another. Their advance sale, through subscriptions and mail orders, frequently amounts in the larger cities to from eight thousand dollars to twelve thousand dollars before the company arrives, and in many of the two and three night stands they play the houses are sold out for the entire engagement before the first curtain rises. Sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen thousand dollars a week are common takings for them, and in three nights in Milwaukee last season they played to over nine thousand dollars.

These figures are impressive, not alone as representing the earning capacity of Mr. and Mrs. Sothern, but as proving how important is the work of their organization and how much they have to do with maintaining standards of quality and dramatic taste in the American theater.

The Sotherns make it a point never to live in hotels during their tour. In the cities they rent a private furnished house. When they are traveling they live in their private car and carry with them wherever they go a complete retinue of servants.

POPULARITY VERSUS MATRIMONY

In England the theatrical family is an established and popular institution. For years the Bancrofts, the Kendals, the Terrys, the Beerbohm-Trees, the Maudes, the Forbes-Robertsons, and so on have acted in family groups, and the accepted domesticity of their home lives has frequently been reflected in the stories of the plays in which they appeared.

In this country, however, it has become the foolish custom rather to frown upon the mingling of domesticity and art. There was a time when it was said that Charles Frohman not only discouraged the mating of his leading players, but positively refused to present husband and wife in the principal rôles of the same play. Of late years less attention has been paid to this sop to a sentimental public.

Mr. and Mrs. Sothern have defiantly and successfully played opposite each other in their Shakespearian repertoire. William Faversham and Julie Opp-Faversham have spurned tempting offers for separate engagements. The Kelcey-Shannons have gone on their way for several years as important members of the same organization, and there are several instances like unto that of Alla Nazimova, who not many months ago married Charles Bryant and continued him in the position of her leading man.

Two examples in the current stage entertainments of New York are those of the H. V. Esmonds, representing the established English custom, and the William Colliers, standing for the family idea in America.

The Esmonds have long been popular in London. Mrs. Esmond's *nom de théâtre* is Eva Moore, and she has for many years been accepted as one of the most talented ingénues of the English stage. Mr. Esmond is both an actor and a playwright, with whose work, in the latter capacity, American theatergoers are more or less familiar, particularly through the success of "When We Were Twenty-One."

This season these English players were brought to America by Charles Frohman to present Mr. Esmond's play, "Eliza Comes to Stay." It proved to be rather thin and conventional entertainment.

The second play the Esmonds offered was called "The Dear Fool," and though it promised well during its first act, it failed to live up to that promise. In this play Mrs. Esmond appeared as a charming widow who was nearing forty and gazing longingly back at the time she was twenty. Mr. Esmond is a forty-year-old bachelor and would marry the charming widow if she would have him. But she has a notion that if she married a man considerably younger than herself it would, in a way, keep her in touch with her vanishing youth.

While she is in this state of mind she receives word that a youthful admirer is about to leave London for Canada. Impulsively she bolts from her suburban home intending to bid him a chaste good-by and return in time for dinner. In place of which she is induced to remain. Returning home next day, she tries to lie herself out of the compromising situation and becomes hopelessly entangled.

During her absence her youngest son has fallen from a tree in the orchard and death comes very close to him. Which she accepts as God's punishment for her sin. In the end, when it comes to a question of whether she will rejoin the lover she has now come to loathe, or permit the still loyal bachelor to forgive and marry her, she decides in the bachelor's favor.

Mrs. Esmond makes the widow rather a flippant little sinner, and flippant sinners never have been very popular with our audiences. It does not seem likely, therefore, that "The Dear Fool" will linger much longer than did "Eliza," who came to stay but suddenly changed her mind.

The William Colliers, who not only support each other, but likewise take care of all the other members of their family who happen to be without other work, are just now offering the second play of their New York season, "Who's Who," having been found wanting. "A Little Water On the Side" the new one is called, the water referring to Long Island Sound, which abuts a valuable piece of shore land owned by the hero. William's enemy, a real-estate agent, would take away the property from William, but is amusingly frustrated. Paula Marr-Collier appears as the daughter of this particular enemy, and in order to make his revenge complete William marries her. "Buster" Collier, their eleven-year-old son, is the village cut-up, as usual. The little farce is filled with the usual Collier laughs, and many of these are changed nightly to fit local conditions.

"A THOUSAND YEARS AGO" AND DIXEY.

It must have been something of a surprise to the older playgoers who sat with the first audience that saw Percy Mackaye's

"A Thousand Years Ago," when Henry E. Dixey, blithely blowing the pipes of a mountebank, capered out upon the scene with his "Adonis" legs quite as lively and shapely as ever they were. Dixey has practically been lost to the legitimate stage for many years. He has been in vaudeville, and enjoyed a tour or two on the road, but Broadway proper has seen him so seldom that it had ceased to miss him.

He is an Italian mummer, driven out of his own country by unfair criticism. Arrived in Peking, he meets Frederick Warde, as emperor of that ancient city, and discovers that the emperor's daughter, she being the opulent Rita Jolivet, is far from a happy maiden. She has settled into a sort of love-sickness, and because she has given her heart to a handsome beggar in the street whom she may not wed, she refuses to consider any titled suitors.

Dixey, being a daring and imaginative youth, promptly agrees to effect a cure of the young woman's malady within twenty-four hours. But during that time he insists the emperor shall abdicate in his favor. The jester shall rule for a day, and if he fail to set aright this particular worry of the commonwealth he is willing to pay forfeit with his life. Succeeding scenes, pictured against an effective scenic background, show how Henry E. finds the beggar lover of the pearl of Peking and proves him to be a prince in place of a nobody—a prince forced to assume a disguise because he happened to be the hereditary enemy of the princess's father.

Then the beggar marries the princess, the ancient feud is closed, and Dixey is given a duchy. The scenic setting of "A Thousand Years Ago," patterned on the Reinhardt models, is a most effective feature.

IN THE MUNSEY GALLERY OF PORTRAITS

Although Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson is fixed in his determination to retire permanently a year hence, he promises that Gertrude Elliott Forbes-Robertson will continue on the stage for several years to come. Each year she has shown a definite artistic advance in her work, and it would be a pity indeed if she were to give up her profession at this time.

Joan Sawyer, who has achieved new dancing triumphs at the Folies-Marigny, a fashionable after-theater cabaret in New York where the program does not begin until 11 o'clock P.M., enjoys the unique distinction of having once been discharged from a musical comedy company because she could not dance. Ask her to-day, and she will admit the charge. She could not, in fact, dance as the stage-director of that company wanted her to dance. It was not her style, and she did not take either kindly or gracefully to it. But when the present tango craze started and Miss Sawyer happened one day to dance with Maurice, he had engaged her at one hundred dollars a week as his dancing partner before he let her sit down. She is an exceptionally pretty and graceful young woman, and there is an unmistakable air of distinction and refinement about each of her dances.

Little Vivian Martin, although she proudly boasts the title of Mrs. William Jefferson, seems still a stage child. Not so many years ago she did play child parts with Andrew Mack. She was also one of the *Peter Pans* selected by Charles Frohman to follow Maude Adams in that success. She made her début with Richard Mansfield in "Cyrano de Bergerac," selling cakes in the bake-shop scene. This year she was a well-intentioned but foolish little wife in "The Marriage Game."

Florence Moore, who, with her husband, William Montgomery, is one of the most dependable of musical comedy entertainers, started life as a worker by answering to the call of "Cash!" in a Philadelphia department-store. According to her own story, the floor-manager one day caught her dancing to a rag-time tune being played in the piano department, and suggested that if she wanted to entertain she had better seek another stage. She did, and has been eternally thankful to that floor-walker ever since. The Montgomerys own a big farm in Delaware, and are not a bit worried as to the future—particularly their future.

Doris Keane and Margaret Illington have achieved individual successes in the West this season. Miss Keane has been acclaimed a rising star of the first magnitude in Edward Sheldon's pretty play, "Romance," and Miss Illington is one of the most successful of the actresses selected to play the heroine of "Within the Law" west of the Missouri River. Both are natives of Western States, Miss Keane having been born in Michigan and Miss Illington in Illinois.

NINETY YEARS OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE

BY FREDERIC AUSTIN OGG

Associate Professor of History at Simmons College

THE boldest act in American history was the declaring of independence by the thirteen Colonies in 1776. Second only to that was the publication to the world, half a century later, of the body of principles conveniently known as the Monroe Doctrine. A new step which just now is being urged upon the country, if taken, will be worthy of being ranked in daring very close to these two, namely, the formal abrogation by the United States of the Monroe Doctrine as an "obsolete shibboleth," and the substitution for it of a new and altogether different system of foreign policy.

It must be confessed that the Monroe Doctrine, whose curious fortune it is to bear the name of one of the least aggressive of our Presidents, has ever been a shifting, even shadowy, thing. Men to-day are debating in all seriousness whether it is alive or dead. Not a few persons, even in our own country (identified largely, it must be said, with academic rather than with official circles), are maintaining that the policy is outworn and, in effect, defunct.

This opinion, however, goes by no means unchallenged, and from authoritative and influential quarters there have been forthcoming assertions that the Doctrine was never more alive than it is at the present moment. Such was the tenor of the rejoinder called out from Mr. Roosevelt last December, when, at the state reception tendered him at the University of Santiago, the spokesman of the Chilean government made bold to pronounce the Doctrine "a dead issue." And it is interesting to observe that although eighteen years ago Lord Salisbury denied flatly that the Doctrine was even then alive, in his speech at the last Thanksgiving dinner of the American Society in London, Viscount Haldane, the British lord chancellor, expressed the view not only that the Doctrine is a "ruling force" to-day, but that in the future it will expand and dominate yet more completely.

From first to last, the course of the United States as a nation among nations has been shaped in accordance with two great principles. The first to be enunciated, though not necessarily the more fundamental, was that of abstention from interference in the affairs of the European world. This principle found its ablest exponent in earlier days in Washington and received its most forceful expression in the Farewell Address. Recognizing that Europe had a set of "primary interests" which concerned the United States but slightly or not at all, and making the most of the advantage afforded by physical remoteness, the founders of the nation's foreign policy very wisely mapped out a course which dissociated the country as largely as possible from the vicissitudes of European politics.

And, although not all European publicists are willing to admit it, throughout our history this attitude of passivity toward the political affairs of the Old World has been adhered to with a consistency which is remarkable. It was subjected to a severe test by the Greek war of independence in 1821-1829, and to a yet severer one by the rising of the Hungarians against Austria at the middle of the century. On both occasions there was a powerful demand that the United States should intervene in behalf of a people struggling for the primal right of self-government. But, in deference to the larger interests involved, the pressure was withstood.

The second great historic principle of American foreign policy is that which forbids the powers of Europe to interfere with the political affairs of the independent states of the western hemisphere. Washington and Jefferson committed the nation to a course of non-intervention in Europe, but concerning the part which Europe might play in America they were, of necessity, silent. Only after there had been decades of growth in population, resources, and prestige did their successors feel free to apply the logic of the Farewell Address by declaring, in effect, that American non-intervention in Europe implied European non-intervention in America. Not until this principle of reciprocal abstention had been laid down, however, were the broad lines of the nation's foreign policy complete.

The cardinal assertions of the memorable message of December 2, 1823, were (1) that the American continent was to be considered no longer open for colonization by any European power, and (2) that any attempt on the part of a European power, or combination of powers, to interfere with the destiny of an independent American nation would be regarded by the United States as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward herself.

The occasion for the official enunciation of these principles was supplied by two menacing situations which had arisen—the one being the attempted extension of Russia's claims on the Pacific coast of North America southward over a belt of territory two hundred and fifty miles in width, the other being the contemplated intervention of the Allies of Europe in the desultory contest which was being waged to the south of us for the independence of the long-misgoverned colonies of Spain. It fell to President Monroe to bear public responsibility for the declarations which were made, and for doing so he should be accorded great credit.

The authorship of the declarations, however, was not exclusively, nor even chiefly, his. It was shared by at least a half-dozen men. Curiously enough, the original suggestion came, not from an American at all, but from the British foreign minister, George Canning. That suggestion was first communicated to the American minister at the British court, Richard Rush, and was, in effect, that Great Britain and the United States should enter jointly into a declaration against the threatened intervention of the Allies in Spanish America. In words which express almost exactly the sentiments of the later Presidential message, Mr. Rush affirmed the opinion that, in its essentials at least, the attitude of Great Britain was shared by his own country; and he must be regarded as one of the several contributors to the policy then in process of formulation.

When the British proposal was received in America the President turned to a number of counselors, both official and unofficial. Two of the three living ex-Presidents, Jefferson and Madison, advised that the plan of a joint declaration be followed, and in the cabinet Calhoun advocated the same course. The making of a declaration was favored almost unanimously; the only real question was whether the United States should act in conjunction with Great Britain or independently. In the end, the President was convinced by the arguments of the Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, that the declaration should be made independently, and the sending in of the annual message in December, 1823, was selected as the most fitting opportunity.

This involved some delay, and the British declaration, communicated by Canning to the French ambassador, the Prince de Polignac, antedated the American by some nine weeks. Adams had the satisfaction, none the less, of preventing the United States from coming in the matter "as a cockboat in the wake of the British man-of-war."

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S PRONOUNCEMENT

If the principles set forth in the message of Monroe represent the combined statesmanship of Jefferson, Madison, Adams, Calhoun, Rush, and numerous other men of the time, the policy underlying them was one toward which the United States had been moving steadily from the beginning. In 1808 Jefferson, while President, had declared that the object of the United States "must be to exclude European influence from this hemisphere." In 1811 Congress resolved that the United States could not, "without serious inquietude," see any territory on her southern border pass into the hands of a foreign power.

Throughout at least a quarter-century before the message of 1823 was penned the idea was developing that the United States had an entire right to impose restrictions, in her own interest, upon the action of foreign powers in relation to territory situated anywhere in the western hemisphere, and the national policy which has sprung from this idea must have taken much the same form had the Monroe message never been written at all.

In 1824 Henry Clay proposed that Congress should lend the weight of its authority to the President's declarations by adopting them in the form of a joint resolution. There was little opposition, but the action suggested was regarded as unnecessary and was not taken. To this day Congress has never, in so many words, reaffirmed the Doctrine.

In 1864, however, the House of Representatives pronounced the operations of the French in Mexico inimical to the traditional policy of the United States. In 1889 the Senate expressed its disapproval of the connection of any European power with a canal across the isthmus. And through three generations both Houses have acquiesced steadily in a course of foreign policy, as pursued by the Executive, whose central principles have been those propounded by Monroe in 1823.

The Monroe Doctrine is not, and is not likely ever to become, international law. It lacks such general assent of the nations as would be necessary to impart to it that quality. But throughout almost a century it has been the accepted public law of the United States—the continuous expression of a continental instinct which is just as deeply rooted to-day as ever it was. Its sanction is that of both might and right. It possesses validity because since its promulgation the United States has been powerful enough to compel respect for it and, if need be, to enforce it at the bayonet's point.

It is valid also because it contravenes no principle of morals, does injury to no proper interest, and, while conceived in a measure as an instrument of self-defense, possesses and has always possessed a strongly altruistic character. It has received the formal assent of few nations, even in Latin America. But, as is indicated by the attitude of Europe during the present Mexican imbroglio, it is more widely and more favorably recognized to-day than at any previous time. It has never been successfully contested by any nation, and not more than once or twice has it been seriously resisted.

TWISTS OF THE DOCTRINE

During the ninety years of its recognized existence, none the less, the Doctrine has been subjected to many curious turns of interpretation and usage. It has been invoked when it had no proper bearings. It has gone unmentioned when the occasion for an appeal to it seemed peculiarly apt. It has been contracted and stretched, misconstrued and distorted quite beyond recognition.

The first twist given it was imparted within seven months after Monroe's retirement from office by Secretary Clay, acting under the direction of President Adams, when France and other nations were informed that the United States would not consent to the occupation of Cuba and Porto Rico "by any other power than Spain under any contingency whatever." President Monroe had declared against the acquisition of title to territory by original occupation or settlement; the Adams administration declared against the transfer of any colonial possession in America from one European power to another.

The second of these declarations was very different from the first; but from 1825 it acquired quite as fixed a place in the public policy of the country as did its progenitor. Secretary Fish was entirely correct when, in 1869, he said of President Grant's declaration against the transfer of Cuba from Spain to any other power that it "but followed the teachings of all our history."

A second twist, considerably more violent, was imparted by President Polk. In 1848 the white population of the semi-independent Mexican state of Yucatan, threatened with extermination by the Indians, appealed to Great Britain, Spain, and the United States for protection, offering in return a transfer of the "dominion and sovereignty" of the peninsula. In a much-criticised message to Congress Polk recommended immediate military occupation of the territory and, invoking the Monroe Doctrine, urged that Yucatan be annexed by the United States to avert the possibility of its being annexed, at its own request, by a European nation.

Concerning the course to be pursued in

such a contingency Monroe had said nothing; but Polk laid down the rule that an American state should not be allowed, even of its own free will, to offer its sovereignty and dominion to a European power. Fortunately, the situation in Yucatan so shaped itself that the President felt under no constraint to attempt to carry into effect his advanced doctrine. In 1853 a resolution which embodied it was introduced in the Senate by Lewis Cass. It was not adopted, but it was discussed at length and with much favor.

Throughout the middle of the century the Doctrine, in one guise or another, continued to control in the shaping of the nation's foreign policy. It bore fruit in the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850, which both neutralized any interoceanic canal that might be built in Central America and expressly excluded Great Britain from occupying or exercising dominion over any part of that region. It was interposed as a constant barrier to the transfer of Cuba by Spain to Great Britain or France. And at the close of the Civil War it achieved the most notable of all its triumphs in the overthrow of French dominion in Mexico.

It is true that in these affairs the name of Monroe was seldom mentioned. Secretary Seward extricated Mexico from the French entanglement without ever once alluding in his despatches to the Monroe Doctrine as such. In his Mexican operations the Emperor Napoleon III, however, had violated the Doctrine in its original and most fundamental principle, and the course pursued by the United States was dictated by precisely the considerations that underlay the message of 1823. While the hands of the government at Washington were tied by the contest between the North and the South, the ambitious emperor had caused his soldiers to invade Mexico, to overthrow the existing republic, and, after a travesty of a popular election, to set up as emperor of the distracted country an Austrian prince, Maximilian.

The policy of the new régime, directed from Paris, was to impose every possible restriction upon American trade and influence south of the Rio Grande. When the Civil War was over, protest from Washington was converted into action. A force was moved to the border, and the French were given to understand that they must withdraw or fight. They preferred to withdraw, and the episode came to a close with the execution of the unfortunate Maximilian and the restoration of the republic. The principles most properly associated with the name of Monroe were vindicated completely.

Later in the century the Monroe Doctrine was invoked repeatedly, and several times it was given an interpretation which carried it far beyond its original bounds. Thus, in 1881, when Chile and Peru were at war and it was proposed that the United States, Great Britain, and France should take measures to bring about a restoration of peace, Secretary Blaine interposed objection to the reference of purely American questions to European arbitration; and that American issues are to be decided by Americans has become a well-established rule of our diplomacy, to be applied in all instances save when appeal is to be made nowadays to the tribunal at The Hague.

THE VENEZUELAN INCIDENT

The farthest extension of policy undertaken in the name of the Monroe Doctrine was that made in 1895, when President Cleveland and Secretary Olney sought to restrain Great Britain from occupying territory disputed between the British colony of Guiana and the republic of Venezuela. As early as 1870 President Grant declared that the time was not far distant when, " in the natural course of events," all political connection between Europe and America would cease. In the crisp despatches of Mr. Olney it was asserted that any permanent political union between a European and an American state was " unnatural and inexpedient "; that the interests of Europe are irreconcilably diverse from those of America; that to-day the United States is " practically sovereign on this continent and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition "; that it is, in effect, " master of the situation."

All this was affirmed to be the " Monroe Doctrine " and a permanent part of international law for American affairs. Mr. Olney was careful to explain that the Doctrine does not establish any general protectorate by the United States over other American states, that it does not relieve any American state from its pecuniary or other obligations as fixed by international law, and that it does not contemplate interference by the United States in the internal affairs of any American nation or in the relations of American nations one with another.

But it is hardly to be wondered at that Lord Salisbury failed to find in the Secretary's contentions the Doctrine of 1823. He may well have been reminded of the Oxford undergraduate's characterization of an American football game: "It would have been just as good a fight without the ball; the ball was only in the way."

The territory in dispute in the Venezuelan controversy had an area of but a few thousand acres, and it was virtually uninhabited. The disposition of it in no way affected the immediate interests of the United States; nor did it threaten the permanence or the stability of American institutions. None the less, the United States assumed the right to defend the interests of her sister republic, conducted a prolonged and costly investigation of the merits of the controversy, and was brought to the very threshold of war with the greatest of European powers before the adjudication of the dispute by peaceful means was at length arranged.

Within the past fifteen years the Monroe Doctrine has been reasserted several times, and in its practical application it has been extended further than ever before in two or three directions. In the very year (1899) in which it was reaffirmed in a peculiarly convincing manner at the first Peace Conference at The Hague it was supplemented by the avowal of a right on the part of the United States to intervene in the internal affairs of an American colony belonging to a nation with which this country was at peace—the very thing that Monroe in 1823 said, and truly enough, that the United States had no disposition to do. The consequence of our first intervention of this character was, of course, the war with Spain.

In 1905 there was an innovation of a yet more radical nature. Under a *modus vivendi* (converted in 1907 into a treaty) the United States acquired the right to administer the customs and to undertake the adjustment of the debts of the bankrupt, but wholly independent, republic of Santo Domingo. The fact that the powers of Europe had intimated that unless such measures should be adopted they would feel obliged to take steps to relieve an intolerable situation did not deprive the course embarked upon of its novel, and even startling, character.

Under the operation of the Monroe Doctrine neither the intervention in Cuba nor that in Santo Domingo would have been permitted if undertaken by any European power. But it has become a corollary of that Doctrine that it is incompatible with international equity for the United States to refuse to allow other nations to employ the only means at their disposal to satisfy the claims of their citizens, and yet to decline herself to take steps to see that justice is done.

During the term of Mr. Taft the State Department sought to bring about in Nicaragua an arrangement similar to that existing in Santo Domingo. The effort failed, but it is being renewed by the authorities of the present administration. Incidentally, it may be remarked that the policy of President Wilson in respect to the existing Mexican situation indicates a disposition to assume a general supervision of American political conditions in the interest of genuinely democratic government. This, of course, would involve still another amplification of the leadership of the United States in the western world.

THE DOCTRINE'S VITAL SIDE

Of the two essential principles contained in the original Monroe Doctrine, one, the closure of America to colonization by European powers, is obsolete only in the sense that opportunity for such colonization has virtually passed; the other, which excludes European powers from interference in the political affairs of independent American states, has received the almost unanimous support of public men of all shades of political belief during ninety years and is to-day quite as vital as at any time in the past. Those who contend that the Doctrine should be cast upon the political scrap-heap are not unlikely to be thinking rather of Polk's, Olney's, or some one else's glosses than of the Doctrine itself.

It is urged, with truth, that whereas in 1823 the United States was the only strong nation in the western hemisphere, other stable and progressive nations have now arisen, notably the Argentine Republic, Brazil, and Chile—nations which do not need, and cannot be expected to endure with patience, the protection and patronage of the United States. It is affirmed, again with much reason, that the disinterestedness and good faith of the United States in maintaining the Monroe Doctrine are suspected by Latin America, and that large numbers of our southern neighbors steadfastly believe that the professions made at Washington are but cloaks for aggression. It is alleged, too, that the enforcement of the Doctrine involves expense and responsibility with which the United States is not called upon any longer to burden herself.

To most persons, however, these arguments will hardly appeal with convincing force. Great as have been the changes of condition in the Latin-American world, the most essential feature of the situation of 1823 remains, namely, the possibility that one or more of the European powers might choose, if the way were clear, to assert a controlling influence in the political destinies of a weaker American state. But for the attitude maintained by the United States, Germany might well gratify her longing for more favorably situated colonies by assuming a guiding hand in Uruguay or some other comparatively defenseless portion of South America.

THE DOCTRINE AS A DUTY

Even if the enforcement of the Doctrine is a source of trouble and expense, the question may well be asked whether, so long as there remain American republics which are not immune against foreign aggression, it will not be the duty of the United States as a great and rich nation to befriend her weaker neighbors as in times past. American possession or protection has never been extended to any Latin-American territory without the result of rescuing the mass of the people from a bad situation and placing them permanently in a better one.

For the policy of broadening the Monroe Doctrine by admitting to copartnership with the United States in the execution of it the stronger and more stable Latin-American nations, especially the Argentine Republic, Brazil, and Chile, there is a great deal to be said. The Monroe Doctrine might thus eventually become essentially a Pan-American Doctrine. But, after all, the policy of the United States in relation to these superior states has long been that of cooperation rather than that of patronizing tutelage. In 1912 Secretary Knox declared in a public address that these more advanced republics are "consciously or unconsciously, fellow sponsors with the United States of the Monroe Doctrine," and pointed out how the growth of such nations "lightens our responsibility."

THE CANAL TRUSTEESHIP

Finally may be mentioned the very special obligation which the construction of the Panama Canal imposes on the United States to preserve peace and order in the lands surrounding the Caribbean Sea and the approaches to the canal on the Pacific. The new trusteeship into which we have entered can hardly be fulfilled to the world's satisfaction unless, in the Central American zone at least, the traditional policy of non-intervention by alien powers shall be enforced in letter and spirit. Certainly the opening of the canal would be a strange occasion for the relaxation of this policy.

Not all of the principles which have passed at various times under the name of the Monroe Doctrine have been either serviceable or justifiable. The Doctrine itself may be thought of as a summation of American public interest asserted in different forms at irregular intervals rather than as the expression of a unified and continuous policy. But, taken at the very least, it has played a part in the development of the two Americas which is incalculable.

It was a controlling factor in the emancipation of all of the countries south of the Rio Grande. But for it, the whole of Latin-America might not inconceivably have become a network of spheres of influence of the European colonizing nations, precisely as did Africa and parts of Asia in the nineteenth century. It many times reenforced the determination of the United States to keep clear of the maze of European diplomacy and war when the temptation to pursue a different course was great. It helped in the winning of the prolonged fight for the elimination of European control of the transisthmian canal routes. It has increased the respect of Europe for the United States as a nation. And, despite minor grievances, real or imagined, on the part of our Latin-American neighbors, one cannot refrain from believing that it has laid foundations for the gratitude and good-will of unborn generations from the Lakes to the Horn.

THE LONE WOLF*

A NOVEL—COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

AUTHOR OF "JOAN THURSDAY," "THE BRASS BOWL," "THE BLACK BAG," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. F. SCHABELITZ

CHAPTER I

TROYON'S

IT must have been Bourke who first said that even if you knew your way about Paris you had to lose it in order to find it to Troyon's. But then Bourke was proud to be Irish.

Troyon's occupied a corner in a jungle of side streets, well withdrawn from the bustle of the adjacent boulevards of St. Germain and St. Michel, and in its day was a restaurant famous with a fame jealously guarded by a select circle of patrons. Its cooking was the best in Paris, its cellar second to none, its rates ridiculously reasonable; yet Baedeker knew it not. And in the wisdom of those who did know this was well; it were a pity to loose upon so excellent an establishment those swarms of tourists that profane every temple of gastronomy on the right bank of the Seine.

The building was of three stories, painted a dingy drab, and trimmed with dull-green shutters. The restaurant occupied almost all of the street-front of the ground floor; a blank, non-committal double doorway at one extreme of the plate-glass windows was seldom open and even more seldom noticed.

These doors were squat and broad, closing the mouth of a wide, stone-walled passageway. In one of the two substantial wings of oak a smaller doorway had been cut for convenience sake. By this route Troyon's guests gained a courtyard, a semiroofed and shadowy place, cool on the hottest day, from which a staircase, with an air of leading nowhere in particular, climbed lazily to the second story and thereby justified its modest pretensions; for the two upper floors of Troyon's might have been plotted by a nightmare-ridden architect after witnessing one of the first of the Palais Royal farces.

A medieval maze of corridors, long and short, complicated by many unexpected steps and staircases and enigmatic doors, running every which way, and as a rule landing one in the wrong room, linked together some twoscore bedchambers. There were no salons or reception-rooms, there was never a bath-room, there wasn't even running water aside from two hallway taps, one to each story.

The honored guest and the exacting went to bed by lamplight; others put up with candlesticks; gas burned only in the corridors and the restaurant — asthmatic jets that, spluttering blue within globes obese, semiopaque, and yellowish, went well with furnishings and decorations of the second empire to which years had lent a mellow and somehow rakish dinginess; since nothing was ever refurbished.

With such accommodations the guests of Troyon's were well content. They were not many, to begin with, and they were almost all middle-aged *bourgeois*, a caste that resents innovations. They took Troyon's as they found it; the rooms suited them admirably, and the tariff was modest. Why do anything to disturb the

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perennial peace of so discreet and confidential an establishment?

One did much as one pleased there, providing one's bill was paid with tolerable regularity and the hand kept supple that operated the *cordon* in the small hours of the night. Papa Troyon came from a tribe of innkeepers and was liberal-minded; while as for *madame,* his wife, she cared for nothing but pieces of gold.

To Troyon's on a wet winter night in the year 1893 came the child who, as a man, was to call himself Michael Lanyard.

He must have been four or five years old at that time; an age at which consciousness is just beginning to recognize its individuality and memory registers with capricious irregularity. He arrived at the hotel in a state of excitement involving an almost abnormal sensitiveness to impressions; but that was soon drowned deep in dreamless slumber of healthy exhaustion; and when he came to look back through a haze of days, of which each had made its separate and imperative demand upon his budding emotions, he found his store of memories strangely dulled and disarticulate.

The earliest definite picture was that of himself, a small but vastly important figure, nursing a heavy heart in a dark corner of a *fiacre.* Beside him sat a man who swore fretfully into his mustache whenever the whimperings of the boy threatened to develop into honest bawls—a strange creature, with pockets full of candy and a way with little boys which was in public surly and domineering, in private timid and propitiatory. It was raining monotonously, with that heavy-spirited persistence which is the genius of Parisian winters; and the paving of the interminable, strange streets was as black glass shot with colored lights.

Some of the streets roared like famished beasts, others again were silent, if with a silence no less sinister. The rain made incessant crepitation on the roof of the cab, and the windows wept without respite. Within the *fiacre* a smell of mustiness contended feebly with the sickening reek of a cigar which the man was forever relighting and which as often turned cold between his teeth. Outside unwearying hoofs were beating their deadly rhythm — *cloppetty-clop.*

Back of all this lurked something formless but alluring, something sad and sweet and momentous, which belonged very personally to the child, but which he could never quite realize. Memory crept blindly toward it over a sword-wide bridge. There had been, or the child had dreamed it, a long and wearisome journey by railroad, the sequel to one by boat more brief but wholly loathsome. Beyond this point memory failed, though sick with yearning.

And the child soon gave over his instinctive, but rather inconsecutive, efforts to retrace his history — life at Troyon's furnished him with compelling and obliterating interests. *Madame* saw to that.

It was *madame* who took charge of the child when the strange man dragged him crying from the cab through a cold, damp place gloomy with shadows and up-stairs to a warm, bright bedroom: a formidable body, this *madame,* with cold eyes and many hairy moles, who made odd noises in her throat while she undressed the little boy with the man standing by, noises meant to sound compassionate and maternal, but, to the child at least, hopelessly otherwise.

Then drowsiness stealing upon one over a pillow wet with tears—oblivion.

And *madame* it was who ruled with iron hand the strange new world to which the boy awakened.

The man was gone by morning, and the child never saw him again; but inasmuch as those about him understood no English and he no French, it was some time before he comprehended the false assurances of *madame* that his father had gone on a journey, but would presently return. The child knew positively that the man was not his father, but when he was able to make this correction the matter had faded into insignificance—life had become too painful to leave time or inclination for the adjustment of such minor and incidental questions as that of one's parentage.

The little boy soon learned to know himself as Marcel, which wasn't his name, and before long was unaware he had ever worn another. As he grew older he became known as Marcel Troyon; but by then he had forgotten how to speak English.

It was a few days after his arrival that the warm, bright bedchamber was exchanged for a cold, dark closet opening off *madame's* boudoir, a cupboard furnished with a rickety cot and a broken chair, lacking any provision for heat or light and ventilated solely by a transom over the door; and inasmuch as *madame* shared the French horror of drafts and so kept her boudoir hermetically sealed nine months of the year, the transom didn't help matters much. But that closet formed the boy's sole refuge, if a precarious one, through several years; there alone was he ever safe from kicks and cuffs and scoldings for faults beyond his comprehension; but he was never permitted a candle, and the darkness and loneliness made the place one of haunted terror to the sensitive and imaginative nature of the growing child.

He was, however, never insufficiently fed; and the luxury of forgetting misery in sleep could not well be denied him.

By day, until of an age to go to school, he played apprehensively in the hallways with makeshift toys, a miserable, dejected little body with his heart in his mouth at every sudden footfall, very much in the way of *femmes de chambre,* who had nothing in common with the warm-hearted, impulsive, and pitiful serving women of fiction. They complained of him to *madame,* and *madame* came promptly to cuff him.

He soon learned an almost uncanny cunning in the art of effacing himself when she was imminent, to be as still as death and to move with the silence of a wraith. Not infrequently his huddled immobility in a shadowy corner escaped her notice as she passed. But it exasperated her beyond measure to look up, when she fancied herself alone, and become aware of the wide-eyed, terrified stare of the transfixed child.

That he was privileged to attend school at all was wholly due to a great fear that obsessed *madame* of doing anything to invite the interest of the authorities. She was an honest woman, according to her lights, an honest wife, and kept an honest house; but she feared the *gendarmerie* more than the wrath of God. And by ukase of government a certain amount of education was compulsory. So Marcel learned, among other things, to read, and thereby took his first blind step toward salvation.

Reading being the sole pastime which could be practised without making a noise, the boy took to it in self-defense. But before long it had become his passion. He read, by stealth, everything that fell into his hands, a weird *mélange* of newspapers, illustrated Parisian weeklies, novels—cullings from the débris of guest-chambers.

Before Marcel was eleven he had read "Les Misérables" with intense appreciation.

His reading, however, was not long confined to works in the French language. Now and again some departing guest would leave an English novel in his room, and these Marcel treasured beyond all other books; they seemed to him, in a way, a part of his birthright. He called himself, secretly, English in those days, because he knew he wasn't French—that much, at least, he remembered. And he spent long hours poring over the strange words until, at length, they came to seem less strange in his eyes. And then some accident threw his way a small English-French dictionary.

He was able to read English before he could speak it.

Out of school hours a drudge and scullion, the associate of scullions and their immediate betters, drawn from that caste of loose tongues and looser morals which breeds servants for small hotels, Marcel at eleven—as nearly as his age can be computed—possessed a comprehension of life at once exact, exhaustive, and appalling.

Perhaps it was fortunate that he lived without friendships. His concept of woman was incarnate in Mme. Troyon; so he gave all the women of the hotel a wide berth. The men servants he suffered in silence when they would permit it, but his nature was so thoroughly dissociated from anything within their experience that they resented it; a circumstance which exposed him to a certain amount of baiting not unlike that which the village idiot receives at the hands of rustic boors—until the boy learned to defend himself with a tongue, which could distil vitriol from the vernacular, and with fists and feet as well. Thereafter he was left severely to himself and glad of it, since it furnished him with just so much more time for reading and for dreaming over what he read.

By fifteen he had developed into a long, lank, loutish youth, with a face of extraordinary pallor, a sullen mouth, hot, black eyes, and dark hair like a mane, so seldom was it trimmed. He looked considerably older than he was, and the slightness of his body was deceptive, disguising a power of sinewy strength. More than this, he could care very handily for himself in a scrimmage — *la savate* (fighting with the feet) had no secrets from him, and he had picked up tricks from the Apaches quite as effectual as any in the manual of jiu-jitsu.

Paris he knew as you and I know the palms of our hands, and he could converse with the precision of the native-born in any one of the city's several odd *argots*. To these accomplishments he added that of a thoroughly practised petty thief.

His duties were by day those of *valet de chambre* on the third floor; by night he acted as omnibus in the restaurant. For these services he received no pay and less consideration from his employers — who would have been horrified by an innuendo that they countenanced slavery—only his board and a bed in a room scarcely larger, if somewhat better ventilated, than the boudoir closet from which he had long since been ousted. This room was on the ground floor at the back of the house and boasted a small window overlooking a narrow alley.

He was routed out before daylight, and his working day ended, as a rule, at ten in the evening—though when there were performances on at the Odéon the restaurant remained open until an indeterminate hour for the accommodation of the supper trade.

But once back in his kennel, its door closed, Marcel was free to squirm out of the window and roam and range Paris at will. And it was thus that he came by most of his knowledge of the city.

But for the most part Marcel preferred to lie abed and read himself half blind by the light of purloined candle-ends. Books he borrowed as of old from the rooms of guests or else pilfered from quayside stalls and later sold to dealers in more distant quarters of the city. But now and again he would need some work not to be acquired save through outright purchase, and then the guests would pay further, if unconscious tribute, through the sly abstraction of small coins. Your true Parisian, however, keeps track of his money to the ultimate sou, an idiosyncrasy which obliged the boy to practise most of his peculations on the fugitive guest of foreign extraction.

In the number of these, perhaps the one best known to Troyon's was Bourke.

He was a quick, compact, dangerous little Irishman who had fallen into the habit of "resting" at Troyon's whenever a vacation from London seemed a prescription apt to prove wholesome for a gentleman of his kidney; which was rather frequently, arguing that Bourke's professional activities were fairly onerous.

Having received most of his education in Dublin University, Bourke spoke the purest English known, or could when so minded, while his facile Irish tongue had caught the trick of an accent which passed unchallenged on the boulevards. He had an alert eye for pretty women, a heart as big as all outdoors, no scruples worth mentioning, a secret sorrow, and a pet superstition.

The hue of his hair, a clamorous red, was the spring of his secret sorrow. By that token he was a marked man. At irregular intervals he made frantic attempts to disguise it, but the only dye that would serve at all was a jet-black and looked like the devil in contrast with his high coloring. Moreover, before a week had passed, the red would crop up again wherever the hair grew thin, lending him the appearance of a badly singed pup.

His pet superstition was that as long as he refrained from practising his profession in Paris, Paris would stand toward him as an impregnable tower of refuge. The world owed Bourke a living, or he so considered, and it must be allowed that he made collections on account with tolerable regularity and success; but Paris was tax-exempt as long as Paris let him alone.

Not only did Paris suit his tastes excellently, but there was no place, in Bourke's esteem, comparable with Troyon's for peace and quiet. Hence his visits were unpunctuated by trials of rival hostelries, and Troyon's was always expecting Bourke for the simple reason that he invariably arrived unexpectedly, with neither warning nor ostentation, stopped as long as he liked, whether a day or a week or a month, and departed in the same manner.

His daily routine, as Troyon's came to know it, varied but slightly — he breakfasted abed, about half after ten, lounged in his room or the café all day if the weather were bad, or strolled peacefully in the gardens of the Luxembourg if it were good, dined early and well, but always alone, and shortly afterward departed by cab for some well-known bar on the Rive Droite; whence, it is to be presumed, he moved on to other resorts, for he never was home when the house was officially closed for the night, and the hour of his

BOURKE WAS WATCHING HIM WITH BOTH EYES WIDE OPEN

return remained a secret between himself and the *concierge*.

On retiring Bourke would empty his pockets upon the dressing-table, where the boy, Marcel, bringing up Bourke's *petit déjeuner* the next morning, would see displayed a tempting confusion of gold and silver and copper, with a wad of banknotes, and the customary assortment of personal hardware.

Now inasmuch as Bourke was never wide awake at that hour, and always, after acknowledging Marcel's "*bonjour*," rolled over and snored for glory and the saints, it was against human nature to resist the lure of that dressing-table. Marcel seldom departed without a coin or two.

He had yet to learn that Bourke's habits were those of an Englishman, who never goes to bed without leaving all his pocket-money in plain sight and—carefully catalogued in his memory.

One morning in the spring of 1904 Marcel served Bourke his last breakfast at Troyon's.

The Irishman had been on the prowl the previous night, and his rasping snore was audible even through the closed door when Marcel knocked and, receiving no answer, used the pass-key and entered.

At this the snore was briefly interrupted; Bourke, visible at first only as a flaming shock of hair protruding from the bedclothes, squirmed an eye above his artificial horizon, opened it, mumbled inarticulate acknowledgment of Marcel's salutation, and passed blatantly into further slumbers.

Marcel deposited his tray on a table beside the bed, then moved quietly to the windows, closed them, and drew the lace curtains together. The dressing-table between the two windows displayed, amid the silver and copper, more gold coins than it commonly did—some eighteen or twenty louis altogether. Adroitly abstracting in passing a piece of ten francs, Marcel went on his way rejoicing, touched a match to the fire ready-laid in the grate, and was nearing the door when, casting one casual parting glance at the bed, he became aware of a notable phenomenon — the snoring was going on lustily, but Bourke was watching him with both eyes wide and filled with interest.

Startled, and, to tell the truth, a bit indignant, the boy stopped as though at word of command. But after the first flush of astonishment his young face hardened to immobility. Only his eyes remained constant to Bourke's.

The Irishman, sitting up in bed, demanded and received the gold piece, and went on to indict the boy for the embezzlement of several sums running into a number of louis.

Marcel, reflecting that Bourke's reckoning was still some louis shy, made no bones about pleading guilty. Interrogated, the culprit deposed that he had taken the money because he needed it to buy books. No, he wasn't sorry. Yes, it was probable that, granted further opportunity, he would do it again. Advised that he was apparently a case-hardened young criminal, he replied that youth was not his fault; with years and experience he would certainly improve.

Puzzled by the boy's attitude, Bourke agitated his hair and wondered aloud how Marcel would like it if his employers were informed of his peculations.

Marcel looked pained, and pointed out that such a course on the part of Bourke would be obviously unfair; the only real difference between them, he explained, was that where he filched a louis Bourke filched thousands, and if Bourke insisted on turning him over to the mercies of Mme. and Papa Troyon, who would certainly summon a *sergent de ville,* he, Marcel, would be quite justified in retaliating by telling the *préfecture de police* all that he knew about Bourke.

This was no chance shot, and went home. When, dismayed, the Irishman blustered, demanding to know what the boy meant by his damned impudence, Marcel quietly advised him that one knew what one knew—if one read the English newspaper in the café, as Marcel did, one could hardly fail to remark that *monsieur* always came to Paris after some notable burglary had been committed in London; and if one troubled to follow *monsieur* by night, as Marcel had, it became evident that *monsieur's* first calls in Paris were invariably made at the establishment of a famous fence in the Rue des Trois Frères; and, finally, one drew one's own conclusions when strangers dining in the restaurant—as on the night before, by way of illustration — strangers who wore all the hall-marks of police detectives from England, catechized one about a person whose description was the portrait of Bourke, and promised a hundred-franc note for information concerning the habits and whereabouts of that person, if seen.

Marcel added, while Bourke gasped for breath, that the gentleman in question had spoken to him alone, in the absence of other waiters, and had been fobbed off with a lie.

But why—Bourke wanted to know—had Marcel lied to save him, when the truth would have earned him a hundred francs?

" Because," Marcel explained coolly, " I, too, am a thief. *Monsieur* will perceive it was a matter of professional honor."

Now the Irish have their faults, but ingratitude is not of their number.

Bourke, packing hastily to leave Paris, France, and Europe by the first feasible route, still found time to question Marcel briefly, and what he learned from the boy about his antecedents so worked with gratitude upon the Irishman's sentimental nature that when, on the third day following, the Cunarder Carpathia left Naples for New York, she carried among her first-cabin passengers not only a gentleman whose brilliant black hair and glowing pink complexion rendered him a bit too conspicuous for his own comfort, but also, in the second cabin, his valet, a boy of sixteen who looked eighteen.

The gentleman's name on the passenger-list didn't, of course, in the least resemble Bourke. His valet's was given as Michael Lanyard.

The origin of this name is obscure; Michael, being easily corrupted into good Irish Mickey, may safely be attributed to Bourke; Lanyard has a tang of the sea which suggests a reminiscence of some sea-tale prized by the pseudo Marcel Troyon.

In New York began the second stage in the education of a professional criminal. The boy would have searched far to find a preceptor of more sound attainments than Bourke. It is, however, only fair to say that Bourke would have looked far for an apter pupil.

Under his tutelage Michael Lanyard learned many things; he became a mathematician of considerable promise, an expert mechanician, a connoisseur of armor-plate and explosives in their more pacific applications, and he learned to grade precious stones with a glance. Also, because Bourke was born of gentlefolk, he learned to speak English and what clothes to wear and when to wear them, as well as the cultivated use of knife and fork at table; and because Bourke was a diplomatist doomed to blush unseen, he acquired the knack of being at ease in every grade of society—he came to know that a self-made millionaire, taken the right way, is as approachable as one whose millions date back even unto the third generation; he could order a dinner at Sherry's as readily as drinks at Sharkey's. Most valuable accomplishment of all, he learned to laugh.

By way of by-products, he picked up a working acquaintance with American, English, and German slang—French slang he already knew as a mother tongue—considerable geographical knowledge of the capitals of Europe, America, and Illinois, a taste that discriminated between tobacco and the stuff sold as such in France, and a genuine passion for fine paintings.

Finally Bourke drilled into his apprentice the three cardinal principles of successful cracksmanship—to know his ground thoroughly before venturing upon it; to strike and retreat with the swift precision of a hawk; to be friendless.

And the last of these was the greatest.

"You're a promising lad," he said—so often that Lanyard would almost wince from that formula of introduction—"a promising lad, though it's sad I should be to say it instead of proud as I am. For I've made ye—but for me you'd long since have matriculated at La Tour Pointure and graduated with the *canaille* of the Santé. And in time you may become a first-chop operator, which I'm not and never will be; but if you do, 'twill be through fighting shy of two things. The first of them's woman, and the second is man. To make a friend of a man you must lower your guard. Ordinarily 'tis fatal. As for woman, remember this, m' lad: to let love into your life you must open a door no mortal hand can close. And God only knows what'll follow in.

"If ever you find you've fallen in love and can't fall out, cut the game on the instant, or you'll end wearing stripes or broad arrows—the same as myself would, if this cursed cough wasn't going to be the death of me. No, m' lad: take a fool's advice (you'll never get better) and when you're shet of me, which will be soon, I'm thinking, take the lonesome road and stick to the middle of it. 'He travels the fastest who travels alone' is a true saying, but 'tis only half the truth: he travels the farthest into the bargain. Yet the lonesome road has its drawbacks, lad — it's *damned* lonely!"

Bourke died in Switzerland, of consumption, in the winter of 1910—Lanyard at his side till the end.

Then the boy set his face against the world—alone, lonely, and remembering.

CHAPTER II

RETURN

His return to Troyon's, although an enterprise which Lanyard had been contemplating for several years, ever since the death of Bourke, came to pass at length almost purely as an affair of impulse.

He had come through from London by the afternoon service — *via* Boulogne — traveling light, with nothing but a brace of hand-bags and his life in his hands. Two *coups* to his credit since the previous midnight had made the shift advisable, though only one of them, the later, rendered it urgent.

Scotland Yard would, he reckoned, require at least twenty-four hours to unlimber for action on the Omber affair; but the other, the disappearance of the Huysman plans, although not consummated before noon, must have set the chancelleries of at least three powers by the ears before Lanyard was fairly entrained at Charing Cross.

Now his opinion of Scotland Yard was low; its emissaries must operate gingerly to keep within the laws they serve. But the agents of the various continental secret services have a way of making their own laws as they go along—and for these Lanyard entertained a respect little short of profound.

He would not have been surprised had he run foul of trouble on the pier at Folkestone. Boulogne, as well, figured in his imagination as a crucial point—its harbor lights, heaving up over the grim, gray waste, peered through the deepening violet dusk to find him on the packet's deck, responding to their curious stare with one no less insistently inquiring. But it wasn't until he reached the Gare du Nord itself that he found anything to shy at.

Dropping from train to platform, he surrendered his luggage to a ready *facteur* and followed the fellow through the crush, elbowed and shouldered, offended by the pervasive reek of chilled steam and coal-gas and dazzled by the brilliant glare of the overhanging electric arcs.

Almost the first face he saw turned his way was that of Roddy.

The man from Scotland Yard was stationed at one side of the platform gates. Opposite him stood another known by sight to Lanyard — a highly decorative official from the *préfecture de police*. Both were scanning narrowly every face in the tide that churned between them.

Wondering if through some fatal freak of fortuity these were acting under late telegraphic advices from London, Lanyard held himself well in hand. The first indication of an intent to hinder him would have proved the signal for a spectacular demonstration of the ungentle art of not getting caught with the goods.

And for twenty seconds, while the crowd milled slowly through the narrow exit, he was as near to betraying himself as he had ever been — nearer, for he had marked down the point on Roddy's jaw where his first blow would fall and just where to plant a *coup de savate* most surely to incapacitate the minion of the *préfecture;* and all the while he was looking the two over with a manner of the most calm and impersonal curiosity.

But beyond an almost imperceptible narrowing of Roddy's eyes when they met his own, as if the Englishman were struggling with a faulty memory, neither police-agent betrayed a sign of recognition.

And then Lanyard was outside the station, his porter introducing him to a ramshackle taxicab.

No need to speculate whether or not Roddy were gazing after him — in the ragged animal who held the door while Lanyard fumbled for his *facteur's* tip he recognized a runner for the *préfecture;* and beyond question there were many others about. If any lingering doubt troubled Roddy's mind he would only have to ask: "Such-and-such a one took what cab and for what destination?" to be instantly and accurately informed.

In such case to go directly to his apartment, that handy little *rez-de-chaussée* near the Trocadero, was obviously inadvisable. Without apparent hesitation Lanyard directed the driver to the Hôtel Lutetia, tossed the ragged spy a sou, and was off to the tune of a slammed door and a motor that sorely needed overhauling.

The rain, which had welcomed the train a few miles from Paris, was in the city torrential. Few wayfarers braved the swimming sidewalks, and the little clusters of chairs and tables beneath permanent café awnings were one and all neglected. But in the roadways an amazing concourse of vehicles, mostly motor-driven, skimmed, skidded, and shot over burnished asphalt; all, of course, at top speed—else this were not Paris. Lanyard thought of insects on the surface of some dark forest pool.

The roof of the cab rang like a drumhead; the driver blinked through the backsplatter from his rubber apron; now and again the tires lost grip on the treacherous going and provided instants of lively suspense. Lanyard lowered a window to release the musty odor peculiar to French taxis, got well peppered with moisture, and promptly put it up again. Then, insensibly, he relaxed in the toils of memories roused by the reflection that this night fairly duplicated that which had welcomed him to Paris twenty years ago.

It was then that, for the first time in several months, he thought definitely of Troyon's.

And it was then that chance ordained his taxicab to skid. On the point of leaving the Ile de la Cité by way of the Pont St. Michel, it suddenly (one might pardonably have believed) went mad, darting crabwise from the middle of the road to the right-hand footway with evident design to climb the rail and make an end to everything in the Seine.

The driver regained control barely in time to avert a tragedy, and had no more than accomplished this much when a bit of broken glass in the gutter ripped out the belly of a rear tire, which promptly gave up the ghost with a roar like that of a cannon-cracker.

At this the driver, apparently a person of religious bias, said something heartfelt about the sacred name of his pipe and, crawling from under the apron, turned aft to assess damages.

On his own part Lanyard swore in sound Saxon, opened the door, and delivered himself to the pelting shower.

"Well?" he inquired, after watching the driver nuzzle the eviscerated tire for some eloquent moments.

Turning up a distorted face, the other gesticulated with profane abandon, by way of good measure interpolating a few disconnected words and phrases. Lanyard gathered that this was the second accident of like nature since noon, that consequently the cab lacked a spare shoe, and that short of a trip to the garage the damage was irremediable. So he said it couldn't be helped, paid the man, and overtipped precisely as though their journey had been successfully consummated and, standing over his luggage, watched the maimed vehicle limp miserably off through the teeming mists.

Now in normal course his plight should have been relieved within two minutes. But it wasn't. For some time all such taxis as did pass displayed scornfully inverted flags. Also, their drivers jeered, in their pleasing Parisian way, at the lonely outlander occupying a position of such uncommon distinction in the heart of the storm and the precise middle of the Pont St. Michel.

Over to the left, on the Quai de Marché Neuf, the façade of the *préfecture de police* frowned portentously—"La Tour Pointure," as the Parisian loves to term it. Lanyard forgot his annoyance long enough to salute that grim pile with a mocking bow, thinking of the men therein who would give half their possessions to lay hands on him who was only a few hundred yards distant, marooned in the rain!

In its own good time a night-prowling *fiacre* ambled up and veered over to his signal. He welcomed this stroke of good fortune with intense disgust — the shambling, weather-beaten animal between the shafts promised a long, damp crawl to the Lutetia.

And on this reflection he yielded to impulse.

Heaving in his luggage—"Troyon's!" he told the *cocher*.

The cab lumbered off into that dark maze of streets, narrow and tortuous, which backs up from the Seine to the Luxembourg, while its fare reflected that fate had not served him so hardly after all—if Roddy had really been watching for him at the Gare du Nord, meaning to follow and wait for his prey to make some incriminating move, this chance-contrived change of vehicles and destination would throw the detective off the scent and gain the adventurer, at worst, several hours' leeway.

When at length his conveyance drew up at the historic corner Lanyard, alighting, could have rubbed his eyes to see the windows of Troyon's all bright with electric light.

Somehow, and most unreasonably, he had always believed the place would go to the hands of the house-wrecker unchanged.

A smart *portier* ducked out, seized his luggage, and held an umbrella. Lanyard composed his features to immobility as he entered the hotel, of no mind to let the least flicker of recognition be detected in his eyes when they should encounter familiar faces.

And this was quite as well—for again the first he saw was Roddy's!

CHAPTER III

A POINT OF INTERROGATION

THE man from Scotland Yard had just surrendered hat, coat, and umbrella to the porter in the lobby, and was turning through swinging doors to the dining-room. Again taking in Lanyard, his glance seemed devoid of any sort of intelligible expression; and if its object needed all his self-possession in that moment, it was to dissemble relief rather than dismay. An accent of the fortuitous distinguished this second encounter too persuasively to excuse further misgivings. What the adventurer himself hadn't known till within the last ten minutes, that he was coming to Troyon's, Roddy couldn't possibly have anticipated; ergo, whatever the detective's business, it had nothing to do with Lanyard.

And before quitting the lobby Roddy paused long enough to order a fire laid in his room.

So he was stopping at Troyon's — and didn't care who knew it!

His doubts altogether dissipated by this discovery, Lanyard followed his natural enemy into the dining-room with an air as devil-may-care as one could wish and so impressive that the *maître d'hôtel* abandoned the detective to the mercies of one of his captains and himself hastened to seat Lanyard and take his order.

This last disposed of, Lanyard surrendered himself to new impressions — of which the first proved a bit disheartening.

However impulsively, he hadn't resought Troyon's without definite intent, to wit: to gain some clue, however slender, to the mystery of that wretched child, Marcel. But now it appeared he had procrastinated fatally—time and change had left little other than the shell of the Troyon's he remembered. Papa Troyon was gone; *madame* no longer occupied the desk of the *caisse;* inquiries, so discreetly worded as to be uncompromising, elicited from the *maître d'hôtel* the information that the house had been under new management these eighteen months; the old proprietor was dead, and his widow had sold out lock, stock, and barrel, and retired to the country, it was not known exactly where. And with the new administration had come fresh decorations and furnishings and a complete change of personnel—not even one of the old waiters remained.

"'All are gone, the old familiar faces,'" Lanyard quoted in vindictive melancholy —"damn 'em!"

Happily it was demonstrated that the cuisine was being maintained on its erstwhile plane of excellence—one still had that comfort!

Other impressions, less intimate, proved puzzling, disconcerting, and paradoxically reassuring.

Lanyard commanded a fair view of Roddy across the waist of the room. The detective had ordered a meal that matched his aspect well, both of true British simplicity. He was a square-set man with a square jaw, cold, blue eyes, a fat nose, a thin-lipped trap of a mouth, a face as red as rare beefsteak.

His dinner comprised a cut from the joint, boiled potatoes, Brussels sprouts, a bit of cheese, a bottle of Bass. He ate slowly, chewing with the doggedness of a strong character hampered by a weak digestion, and all the while kept his eyes fixed to an issue of the Paris edition of the London *Daily Mail* with an effect of concentration quite too convincing.

Now one doesn't read the Paris edition of the London *Daily Mail* with intense excitement. Humanly speaking, it can't be done.

Where, then, was the object of this so sedulously dissembled interest?

Lanyard wasn't slow to solve this riddle to his satisfaction—in so far, that is, as it was satisfactory to feel yet more certain that Roddy's quarry was another than himself.

Despite the lateness of the hour, which had by now turned ten o'clock, the restaurant had still a dozen tables or so in the service of guests pleasantly engaged in lengthening out an agreeable evening with dessert, coffee, liqueurs, and cigarettes. The majority of these were in couples, but at a table one removed from Roddy's sat a party of three; and Lanyard noticed, or fancied, that the man from Scotland Yard turned his newspaper only during lulls in the conversation in this quarter.

Of the three, one would pass for an American of position and wealth—a man of something more than sixty years, with an execrable accent, a racking cough, and a thin, patrician cast of countenance clouded darkly by the expression of a soul in torment, furrowed, seamed, twisted—a mask of mortal anguish. And once, when he looked up and casually encountered Lanyard's gaze, the adventurer was shocked to find himself staring into eyes that were as the eyes of a dead man—eyes of a gray so light that at a little distance the color of the iris blended indistinguishably with their whites, leaving visible only the round, black points of pupils abnormally distended and staring, blank, fixed, passionless, beneath lashless lids.

For the instant they seemed to explore Lanyard's very soul with a look of remote and impersonal curiosity; then they fell away, and when next the adventurer looked the man had turned to attend to some observation of one of his companions with a smile that fairly transfigured his face, the smile of a charming child.

On his right sat a girl who might be his daughter, for not only was she, too, obviously American, but she was far too young to be the other's wife. A demure, old-fashioned type, well-poised but unassuming, fetchingly gowned, and with sufficient individuality of taste, but not conspicuously; a girl with soft brown hair and soft brown eyes; pretty, not extravagantly so when her face was in repose, but with a slow smile that made her scarcely less than beautiful — in all, Lanyard thought, the kind of woman who is predestined to comfort mankind, whose strongest instinct is the maternal.

She took little part in the conversation, seldom interrupted what was practically a duologue between her putative father and the third member of the little party.

This last was one whom Lanyard was sure he knew, though he could see no more than the back of M. le Comte Remy de Morbihan.

And he wondered with a thrill of amusement if it were possible that Roddy was on the trail of that tremendous buck. If so, it would be a chase worth following—a diversion rendered the more exquisite to Lanyard by the spice of novelty, since for once he would figure as a dispassionate bystander.

The name of Comte Remy de Morbihan, although unrecorded in the Almanach de Gotha, was one to conjure with in the Paris of his day and generation. He claimed the distinction of being at once the ugliest, one of the wealthiest, and the most-liked man in France.

As to his looks, good or bad, they were said to prove infallibly fatal with women, while not a few men, perhaps for that reason, did their possessor the honor to imitate them. The *revues* burlesqued him; Sem caricatured him; Forain counterfeited him extensively in that inimitable series of Monday morning cartoons for *Le Figaro* —one said " De Morbihan " instinctively at sight of that stocky figure, short and broad, topped by a chubby, moonlike mask with waxed mustache, womanish eyes, and never-failing grin.

A creature of proverbial good nature and exhaustless vitality, his extraordinary popularity was due to the equally extraordinary extravagance with which he supported that latest Gallic fad, " le Sport." The Parisian Rugby team was his pampered protégé, he was an active member of the tennis club, maintained not only a flock of automobiles, but a famous racing stable, rode to hounds, was a good field gun, patronized aviation and motor-boat racing, risked as many *maximums* during the Monte Carlo season as the Grand Duke Michael himself, and was always ready to whet rapiers or burn a little harmless powder of an early morning in the Parc aux Princes.

But there were some ugly whispers in circulation about the sources of his fabulous wealth. Lanyard, for one, wouldn't have thought him the properest company or the best Parisian *cicérone* for an ailing American gentleman blessed with independent means and an attractive daughter.

Paris, on the other hand — Paris who forgives everything to him who contributes to her amusement—adored Comte Remy de Morbihan.

But perhaps Lanyard was prejudiced by his partiality for Americans, a sentiment the outgrowth of those several years he had spent with Bourke in New York. He even fancied that between his spirit and theirs existed some subtle bond of sympathy. For all he knew, he might himself be American.

For some time Lanyard strained to catch something of the conversation that seemed to prove so interesting to Roddy, but without success, thanks to the hum of voices that filled the room. In time, however, the gathering began to thin out, until at length there remained only this party of three, Lanyard enjoying a most delectable salad and Roddy puffing a cigar (with such evidence of enjoyment that Lanyard suspected him of the sin of smuggling) and slowly emptying another bottle of Bass.

Under these conditions the talk between De Morbihan and the Americans became public property.

The first remark overheard by Lanyard came from the elderly American, following a pause and a consultation of his watch.

" Quarter to eleven," he announced.

" Plenty of time," said De Morbihan cheerfully. " That is," he amended, " if *mademoiselle* isn't bored."

The girl's reply, something which was accompanied by a pretty inclination of her head toward the Frenchman, was lost in the other's accents. He had a strong and sonorous voice, in strange contrast with his ravaged appearance and distressing cough.

" Don't let that hurry you," he advised cheerfully. " Lucia's accustomed to keeping late hours with me; and whoever heard of a young and pretty woman being bored on the third day of her first visit to Paris?"

He pronounced the name with the hard " c " of the Italian tongue, as though it were spelled " Luchia."

" To be sure," laughed the Frenchman; " one suspects it will be long before *mademoiselle* loses interest in the Rue de la Paix."

" You may well, when such beautiful things come from it," said the girl. " See what we found there to-day."

She slipped a ring from her hand and passed it to De Morbihan.

There followed silence for an instant, then an exclamation from the Frenchman:

" But it is superb! Accept, *mademoiselle,* my compliments. It is worthy even of you."

She flushed prettily as she nodded smiling acknowledgment.

" Ah, you Americans!" De Morbihan sighed. " You fill us with envy — you have the souls of poets and the wealth of princes!"

" But we must come to Paris to find beautiful things for our womenfolk!"

" Take care, though, lest you go too far, M. Bannon."

" How so—too far?"

" You might attract the attention of the Lone Wolf. They say he's on the prowl once more."

The American laughed a trace contemptuously. Lanyard's fingers tightened on his knife and fork; otherwise he made no sign. A sidelong glance into a mirror at his elbow showed Roddy still absorbed in the *Daily Mail.*

The girl bent forward with a look of eager interest.

" The Lone Wolf? Who is that?"

" You don't know him in America, *mademoiselle?* "

" No-o."

" The Lone Wolf, my dear Lucia," the valetudinarian explained in dry and humorous accents, " is the sobriquet fastened by some imaginative French reporter upon a celebrated criminal who seems to have made himself something of a pest over here these last few years. Nobody knows anything definite about him, apparently, but he operates in a most individual way and keeps the police busy trying to guess where he'll strike next."

The girl breathed an incredulous exclamation.

" But I assure you!" De Morbihan protested. " The rogue has had a wonderfully successful career, thanks to his dispensing with confederates and confining his depredations to jewels and similar valuables—portable and easy to convert into cash. Yet," he added, nodding sagely, " one is not afraid to predict that his race is almost run."

" You don't tell me!" the older man exclaimed. " Have they picked up the scent —at last?"

" The man is known," De Morbihan affirmed.

By now the conversation had caught the interest of several loitering waiters, who were listening open-mouthed; and even Roddy seemed a bit startled, and for once forgot to make business with his newspaper, but his wondering stare was exclusively for De Morbihan.

Lanyard put down knife and fork, swallowed a final mouthful of Haut Brion, and lighted a cigarette with the hand of a man who knew not the meaning of nerves.

" *Garçon!*" he called quietly, and ordered coffee and cigars, with a liqueur to follow.

" Known!" the American exclaimed. " They've caught him, eh?"

" I didn't say that," De Morbihan laughed; " but the mystery is no more—in certain quarters."

" Who is he, then?"

" That—*monsieur* will pardon me—I'm not yet free to state. Indeed, I may be indiscreet in saying as much as I do. Yet, among friends—"

His shrug suggested that, as far as *he* was concerned, waiters were not human and the other guests of the establishment non-existent.

" But," the American persisted, " perhaps you can tell us how they got on his track?"

" It was not difficult," said De Morbihan; " indeed, quite simple. This tone of depreciation is becoming, for it was my part to suggest the solution to my friend, the chief of the *sûreté*. He had been annoyed and distressed and was even talking of resigning because of his inability to cope with this gentleman, the Lone Wolf. And since he is my friend I, too, was distressed on his behalf, and badgered my poor wits until they chanced upon the idea which led us to the light."

"You won't tell us?" the girl protested, with a little *moue* of disappointment as the Frenchman paused provokingly.

"Perhaps I should not. And yet—why not? As I say, it was elementary reasoning—a mere matter of logical deduction and elimination. One made up one's mind the Lone Wolf must be a certain type of man; the rest was simply sifting France for the man to fit the theory and then watching him until he gave himself away."

"You're not going to stop there?" the American demanded in an aggrieved tone.

"No? I must continue? Very well; I confess to some little pride. It was a feat. He is cunning, that one!"

De Morbihan paused and shifted sidewise in his chair, grinning like a mischievous child.

By this maneuver, thanks to the arrangement of mirrors lining the walls, he commanded an indirect view of Lanyard, a fact of which the latter was not unaware, though his expression remained unchanged as he sat—with a corner of his eye reserved for Roddy — speculating whether De Morbihan were telling the truth or only boasting for his own glorification.

"Do go on—please!" the girl begged prettily.

"I can deny you nothing, *mademoiselle*. Well, then! From what little was known of this mysterious creature, one readily inferred he must be a bachelor, with no close friends. That is clear, I trust?"

"Too deep for me, my friend," the elderly man confessed.

"Impenetrable reticence," the count expounded—and enjoying himself hugely—"isn't possible in the human relations. Sooner or later one is doomed to share one's secrets, however reluctantly, even unconsciously, with a wife, a mistress, a child, or with some trusted friend. And a secret between two is—a prolific breeder of platitudes! Granted this line of reasoning, the Lone Wolf is of necessity not only unmarried, but practically friendless. Other attributes of his will obviously comprise youth, courage, imagination, a rather high order of intelligence, and a social position — let us say, rather, an ostensible business—enabling him to travel at will hither and yon without exciting comment. So far, good!

"My friend, the chief of the *sûreté*, forthwith commissioned his agents to seek such a one, and by this means several fine fish were enmeshed in the net of suspicion, carefully scrutinized, and one by one let go — all except one, the veritable man. Him they sedulously watched, shadowing him across Europe and back again. He was in Berlin at the time of the famous Rheinhart robbery, though he compassed that *coup* without detection; he was in Vienna when the British embassy there was looted, but escaped by a clever ruse and managed to dispose of his plunder before the agents of the *sûreté* could lay hands on him; recently he has been in London, and there he made love to and ran away with the diamonds of a certain lady of some eminence. You have heard of Mme. Omber, eh?"

Now by Roddy's expression it was plain that, if Mme. Omber's name wasn't strange in his hearing, at least he found this news about her most surprising. He was staring openly, with a slackened jaw and stupefaction in his blank, blue eyes.

Lanyard gently pinched the small end of a cigar, dipped it into his *demi tasse*, and lighted it with not so much as a suspicion of tremor. His brain, however, was working rapidly in the effort to determine whether De Morbihan meant this for a warning or was simply narrating an amusing yarn founded on advance information and amplified by an ingenious imagination. For by now the news of the Omber affair must have thrilled many a continental telegraph-wire.

"Mme. Omber—of course!" the American agreed thoughtfully. "Every one has heard of her wonderful diamonds. The real marvel is that the Lone Wolf neglected so shining a mark as long as he did."

"But truly so, *monsieur!*"

"And they caught him at it, eh?"

"Not precisely; but he left a clue—and London as well—with such haste as would seem to indicate he knew his cunning hand had for once slipped."

"Then they'll nab him soon?"

"Ah, *monsieur,* one must say no more!" De Morbihan protested. "Rest assured that the chief of the *sûreté* has laid his plans — his web is spun, and so artfully that I think our unsociable outlaw will soon be making friends in the prison of the Santé. But now we must adjourn. One is sorry. It has been so very pleasant."

A waiter conjured the bill from some recess of his waistcoat and served it on a clean plate to the American. Another ran bawling for the cloak-room attendant. Roddy glued his gaze afresh to the *Daily Mail.* The party rose.

Lanyard noticed that the American signed the bill instead of settling it with cash, indicating that he resided at Troyon's as well as dined there. And the adventurer found time to reflect that it was odd for such a one to seek that particular establishment in preference to the palatial modern hostelries of the Rive Droite—before De Morbihan, ostensibly for the first time espying Lanyard, plunged across the room with both hands outstretched and a cry of joyous surprise not really justified by their rather slight acquaintanceship.

"Ah! Ah!" he clamored vivaciously. "It is M. Lanyard, who knows all about paintings! But this is delightful—a grand pleasure! You must know my friends. But come!"

And seizing Lanyard's hands, when that one somewhat reluctantly rose in response to this surprisingly overexuberant greeting, he dragged him willy-nilly from behind his table.

"And you are American, too. Certainly you must know one another. Mlle. Bannon — with your permission — my friend, M. Lanyard. And M. Bannon—an old, dear friend, with whom you will share a passion for the beauties of art."

The hand of the American, when Lanyard clasped it, was cold, as cold as ice; and as their eyes met that abominable cough laid hold of the man, as it were, by the nape of his neck, and shook him viciously. Before it had finished with him his sensitively colored face was purple and he was gasping, breathless—and infuriated.

"M. Bannon," De Morbihan explained disconnectedly—"it is most distressing—I tell him he should not stop in Paris at this season."

"It is nothing!" the American interposed bruskly between paroxysms.

"But our winter climate, *monsieur*—it is not fit for those in the prime of health—"

"It is I who am unfit!" Bannon snapped, pressing a handkerchief to his lips—"unfit to live!" he amended venomously.

Lanyard murmured a conventional expression of sympathy. Through it all he was conscious of the regard of the girl. Her soft brown eyes met his candidly, with a look cool in its composure, straightforward in its inquiry, neither bold nor mock-demure. And if they were the first to fall, it was with an effect of curiosity sated, without trace of discomfiture. And somehow the adventurer felt himself measured, classified, filed away.

Between amusement and pique he continued to stare, while the elderly American recovered his breath and De Morbihan jabbered on with unfailing vivacity; and he thought that this closer scrutiny discovered in her face contours suggesting maturity of thought beyond her apparent years—which were somewhat less than the sum of his own—and with this the suggestion of an elusive, provoking quality of wistful languor, a hint of patient melancholy.

"We are off for a glimpse of Montmartre," De Morbihan was explaining—"M. Bannon and I. He has not seen Paris in twenty years, he tells me. Well, it will be amusing to show him what changes have taken place in all that time. One regrets *mademoiselle* is too fatigued to accompany us. But you, my friend—now if you would consent to make our third, it would be most amiable of you."

"I'm sorry," Lanyard excused himself; "but, as you see, I am only just in from the railroad, a long and tiresome journey. You are very good, but I—"

"Good?" De Morbihan exclaimed with violence. "I? On the contrary, I am a very selfish man; I seek but to afford myself the pleasure of your company. You lead such a busy life, my friend, romping about Europe, here one day, God knows where the next, that one must make one's best of your spare moments. You will join us, surely?"

"Really I cannot to-night. Another time, perhaps, if you'll excuse me."

"But it is always this way!" De Morbihan explained to his friends with a vast show of mock indignation. "'Another time, perhaps' — his invariable response!

I tell you, not two men in all Paris have any real acquaintance with this gentleman whom all Paris knows! His reserve is proverbial — 'as distant as Lanyard,' we say on the boulevards!"

And turning again to the adventurer, meeting his cold stare with the De Morbihan grin of quenchless effrontery:

"As you will, my friend!" he granted. "But should you change your mind—well, you'll have no trouble finding us. Ask any place along the conventional route. We see far too little of each other, *monsieur*—and I am most anxious to have a little chat with you."

"It will be an honor," Lanyard returned formally.

In his heart he was pondering several most excruciating methods of murdering the man. What did he mean? How much did he know? If he knew anything, he must mean ill, for assuredly he could not be ignorant of Roddy's business or that every other word he uttered was riveting suspicion of identity with the Lone Wolf or that Roddy was listening with all his ears and staring into the bargain!

Decidedly something must be done to silence this animal, De Morbihan, should it turn out he really did know something!

It was only after profound reflection over his liqueur—while Roddy devoured his *Daily Mail* and washed it down with a third bottle of Bass—that Lanyard summoned the *maître d'hôtel* and asked for a room.

It would never do to fix the doubts of the detective by going elsewhere that night. But, fortunately, Lanyard knew that warren which was Troyon's as no one else knew it; Roddy would find it hard to detain him should events seem to advise an early departure.

CHAPTER IV

A STRATAGEM

When the *maître d'hôtel* had shown him all over the establishment—innocently enough, *en route*, furnishing him with a complete list of his other guests and their rooms, memoranda readily registered by a retentive memory—Lanyard chose the bedchamber next that occupied by Roddy, in the second story.

The consideration influencing this selection was, of course, that so situated he would be in a position not only to keep an eye on the man from Scotland Yard, but also to determine whether or not Roddy were disposed to keep an eye on him.

In those days Lanyard's faith in himself was a beautiful thing. He could not have enjoyed the immunity ascribed to the Lone Wolf so long as he had without gaining a power of sturdy self-confidence in addition to a certain degree of temperate contempt for the spies of the law and all their ways.

Against the peril inherent in this last, however, he was self-warned, believing it to be the most fatal chink in the armor of the lawbreaker, this disposition to underestimate the acumen of the police—far too many promising young adventurers like himself were annually laid by the heels in that snare of their own infatuate weaving. The mouse has every right, if he likes, to despise the cat for a heavy-handed and bloodthirsty beast, lacking wit and imagination, a creature of simple *force majeure;* but that mouse will not advisedly swagger in cat-haunted territory; a blow of the paw is, when all's said and done, a blow of the paw—something to numb the wits of the wiliest mouse.

Considering the case of Roddy, he believed it to be impossible to gage the limitations of that essentially British intelligence—something as self-contained as a London flat. One thing only was certain: Roddy didn't always think in terms of beef and Bass; he was nobody's facile fool; he could make a shrewd inference as well as strike a shrewd blow.

Reviewing the scene in the restaurant, Lanyard felt measurably warranted in assuming not only that Roddy was interested in De Morbihan, but that the Frenchman was well aware of that interest. And he resented sincerely his inability to feel as confident that the count, with his gossip about the Lone Wolf, had been merely seeking to divert Roddy's interest to putatively larger game. It was just possible that De Morbihan's identification of Lanyard with that mysterious personage, at least by innuendo, had been unintentional. But somehow Lanyard didn't believe it had.

The two questions troubled him sorely: Did De Morbihan *know*, did he merely suspect, or had he only loosed an aimless shot which chance had sped to the proper goal? Had the mind of Roddy proved fallow to that suggestion, or had it, with its simple national tenacity, been impatient of such side issues, or incredulous, and persisted in focusing its processes upon the personality and activities of M. le Comte Remy de Morbihan?

However, one would surely learn something illuminating before very long. The business of a sleuth is to sleuth, and sooner or later Roddy must surely make some move to indicate the quarter wherein his real interest lay.

Just at present, reasoning from noises audible through the bolted door that communicated with the adjoining bedchamber, the business of a sleuth seemed to comprise going to bed.

Lanyard, shaving and dressing, could distinctly hear a tuneless voice contentedly humming " Sally in Our Alley," a rendition punctuated by one heavy thump, and then another, and then by a heartfelt sigh of relief — as Roddy kicked off his boots—and followed by the tapping of a pipe against grate-bars, the complaint of a window being lowered for ventilation, the click of an electric-light switch, and the creaking of bed-springs.

Finally, and before Lanyard had finished dressing, the man from Scotland Yard began placidly to snore.

Of course, he might well be bluffing, for Lanyard had taken pains to let Roddy know that they were room neighbors by announcing his selection in loud tones close to the communicating door.

But this was a question which the adventurer meant to have answered before he went out.

It was hard upon twelve o'clock when the mirror on the dressing-table assured him that he was at length in the habit and apparel of a gentleman of elegant nocturnal leisure. But if he approved the figure he cut, it was mainly because clothes interested him and he reckoned his own impeccable. Of their tenant he was feeling just then a bit less sure than he had half an hour since; his regard was lowering and mistrustful.

He was, in short, suffering reaction from the high spirits engendered by his cross-channel exploits, his successful getaway, and the unusual circumstances attendant upon his return to this memory-haunted mausoleum of an unhappy childhood. He even shivered a trifle, as if under premonition of misfortune, and why not?

For, logically considered, a break in the run of his luck was due. Thus far he had played, with a success almost too uniform, his dual rôle, by day the amiable amateur of art, by night the nameless mystery that prowled unseen and preyed unhindered. Could such success be reasonably expected to attend him always? Should he count De Morbihan's yarn a warning? Black must turn up every so often in a run of red; every gambler knows as much. And what was Michael Lanyard but a common gambler, who persistently staked life and liberty against the blindly impartial casts of chance?

With one last look round to make certain there was nothing in his room's calculated disorder to incriminate him were it to be searched in his absence, Lanyard enveloped himself in a long, full-skirted coat, clapped on an opera-hat, and went out, noisily locking the door. He might as well have left it wide; but it would do no harm to pretend he didn't know the bedchamber keys at Troyon's were interchangeable—identically the same keys, in fact, that had been in service in the time of Marcel the wretched.

A single half-power electric bulb now modified the gloom of the hallway; its fellow made a light blot on the darkness of the courtyard. Even the windows of the *conciergerie* were black.

None the less Lanyard tapped them smartly.

"*Cordon!*" he demanded in a strident voice—"*Cordon, si'l vous plaît!*"

" Eh?" A startled grunt from within the lodge was barely audible. Then the latch clicked loudly at the end of the passageway.

Groping his way in the direction of this last sound, Lanyard found the small side door ajar. He opened it and hesitated a moment, looking out as though questioning the weather; simultaneously his deft fingers wedged the latch back with a thin slip of steel.

It had, in fact, not been raining within an hour, but still the sky was dense with a low, sullen wrack of cloud, and still the sidewalks were inky-wet.

The street was lonely and indifferently lighted, but a swift, searching reconnaissance discovered no spy skulking in the shelter of any of the nearer shadows.

Stepping out, he slammed the door and strode briskly round the corner, as if making for the cab-rank that lines up along the Luxembourg Gardens of the Rue de Medicis; his boot-heels made cheerful racket in that quiet hour; he was quite audibly going away from Troyon's.

But instead of holding on to the cab-rank, he turned the next corner, and then the next, rounding the block; and presently, reapproaching the entrance to Troyon's, paused in the recess of a dark doorway and, lifting one foot after another, slipped rubber pads over his heels. Thereafter his progress was practically noiseless.

The smaller door yielded to his touch without a murmur. Inside, he closed it gently and stood a moment listening with all his senses—not with his ears alone, but with every nerve and fiber of his being—with imagination to boot. But there was not a sound or movement in all the house that he could detect.

And no shadow could have made less noise than he, slipping cat-footed across the courtyard and up the stairs, avoiding with superdeveloped sensitiveness every lift that might have complained beneath his tread. In a trice he was again in the corridor leading to his bedchamber.

It was quite as gloomy and empty as it had been five minutes ago, yet with a difference, a something in its atmosphere that made him nod briefly in confirmation of that suspicion which had brought him back so stealthily.

For one thing, Roddy had stopped snoring. And Lanyard smiled over the thought that the man from Scotland Yard might profitably have copied that trick of poor Bourke's, of snoring like the *Seven Sleepers* when most completely awake

It was, naturally, no surprise to find his bedchamber door unlocked and slightly ajar. Lanyard made sure of his automatic, strode into the room, and shut the door quietly, but by no means soundlessly.

He had left the shades down and the hangings drawn at both windows; and since these had not been disturbed, something nearly approaching complete darkness reigned in the room. But though promptly on entering his fingers had closed upon the wall switch near the door, he refrained from turning up the lights immediately, with a fancy, of impish inspiration, that it would be amusing to learn what move Roddy would make when the tension became too much even for his trained nerves.

Several seconds passed without the least sound disturbing the stillness.

Lanyard himself grew a little impatient when his sight didn't become accustomed to the darkness because it was too absolute—it pressed against his staring eyeballs like black fluid, impenetrably opaque, as unbroken as the hush within that room.

Still he waited. Surely Roddy wouldn't be able much longer to endure such suspense.

And, surely enough, the silence was abruptly broken by a strange and moving sound, a hushed cry of alarm that was half a moan and half a sob.

Lanyard himself was startled, for that was never Roddy's voice!

There was a noise of muffled and confused footsteps, as though some one had started in panic for the door, then stopped in terror.

Words followed, the strangest he could have imagined—words spoken in a gentle and tremulous voice:

"In pity's name! who are you and what do you want?"

Thunderstruck, Lanyard switched on the lights.

At a distance of some six paces he saw, not Roddy, but a woman, and not a woman merely, but the girl he had met in the restaurant.

CHAPTER V

ANTICLIMAX

THE surprise was complete; but it's a question which party thereto was the more affected.

Lanyard stared with the eyes of stupefaction, his jaw slack. To his fancy, this thing passed the compass of simple incredulity—it wasn't merely improbable, it was preposterous; it was anticlimax exaggerated to the proportion of the grotesque.

He had come prepared to surprise and bullyrag the most astute police detective of whom he had any knowledge; he found himself surprised and discountenanced by *this!*

Confusion no less intense informed the girl's expression; her eyes were fixed to his with a look of blank inquiry; her face, whose coloring had won his admiration two hours since, was now colorless; her lips were just ajar; the fingers of one hand touched her cheek, indenting it.

SHE GAINED THE THRESHOLD OF HER ROOM IN ONE SWIFT DASH AND FLASHED HIM A FINAL LOOK

The other hand caught up before her the long skirts of a pretty *robe de chambre*, beneath whose edge was visible a hand's-breadth of shimmering white silk, with the toe of a silken mule to match the dressing-gown. Thus she stood, poised for flight, attired only in a negligée over what, one couldn't help suspecting, was her nightdress — her hair was down, she was unquestionably all ready for her bed.

But Bourke's long and patient training had been wasted if this man proved one to remain long at loss. Rallying his wits quickly, he made a brave show of accepting this amazing accident as a commonplace.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Bannon—" he began with a formal bow.

She interrupted with a gasp of wondering recognition: "Mr. Lanyard!"

He inclined his head a second time: "Sorry to disturb you—"

"But I don't understand—"

"Unfortunately," he proceeded smoothly, "I forgot something when I went out and had to come back for it."

"But—but—"

"Yes?"

Suddenly her gaze for the first time broke from his and swept the room with a glance of wild dismay.

"This room," she breathed—"I don't know it—"

"It is mine."

"Yours! But—"

"That is how I happened to — interrupt you."

The girl shrank back a pace—two paces—uttering a low-toned monosyllable of understanding, an "Oh!" abruptly gasped. Simultaneously her face and throat flamed scarlet with the color that flooded them.

"*Your* room, Mr. Lanyard!"

Her tone was so convincing in its modulation of shame and horror that his heart misgave him. Not that alone, but the girl was very good to look upon.

"I'm sure," he began soothingly, "it

doesn't matter. You mistook one door for the—"

"But you don't understand!" She shuddered. "This dreadful habit! And I was hoping I had outgrown it! How can I explain?"

"Believe me, Miss Bannon, you need explain nothing."

"But I must. I wish to. I couldn't bear to have you think— But surely you can make allowances for sleep-walking!"

To this appeal he could at first return nothing more intelligent than a dazed repetition of the term.

So that was how— Why hadn't he thought of it before? Ever since he had turned on the lights he had been subjectively busy trying to invest her presence there with some plausible excuse. But somnambulism had never once entered his mind. And in his stupidity, at pains though he had been to render his words inoffensive in themselves, he had been guilty of constructive incivility.

In his turn Lanyard colored warmly.

"I beg your pardon," he muttered.

The girl paid no attention; she was thinking only of herself and the anomalous position into which her infirmity had tricked her. When she did speak her words ran swiftly:

You see— I was so frightened! I found myself suddenly standing up in darkness, just as if I had jumped out of bed in my sleep at some alarm; and then I heard somebody enter the room and shut the door stealthily. Oh, please understand me!"

"But I do, Miss Bannon—quite."

"I am so ashamed—"

"Please don't consider it that way."

"But now that you know—you don't think—"

"My dear Miss Bannon!"

"But it must be so hard to credit! Why, it's more than a year since it last happened. Of course, as a child, it was almost a habit; they had to watch me all the time. Once— But that doesn't matter. I *am* so sorry!"

"You really mustn't worry," Lanyard insisted. "It's all quite natural — such things do happen—are happening all the time—"

"But I don't want you—"

"I am nobody, Miss Bannon. Besides, I sha'n't mention the matter to a soul. And if ever I am fortunate enough to meet you again, I shall have forgotten it completely—believe me."

There was convincing sincerity in his tone. The girl looked down, as though abashed.

"You are very good," she murmured, moving toward the door.

"I am very fortunate."

Her glance of surprise was question enough.

"To be able to treasure this much of your confidence," he responded with a tentative smile.

She was near the door; he opened it for her, but cautioned her with a gesture and a whispered word: "Wait. I'll make sure nobody's about."

He stepped noiselessly into the hall and paused an instant, looking keenly right and left, listening.

The girl advanced to the threshold and there halted, hesitant, eying him anxiously.

He nodded reassurance: "All right—coast's clear!"

But she delayed one moment more.

"It's you who are mistaken," she whispered, flushing again beneath his regard, from which admiration could not be absent. "It is I who am fortunate—to have met a—gentleman."

Her diffident smile, together with the candor of her eyes, embarrassed him in such degree that for the moment he was unable to frame a reply.

"Good night," she whispered—"and thank you, thank you!"

Her room was at the far end of the corridor. She gained its threshold in one swift dash, noiseless save for the silken whisper of her garments, turned, flashed him a final look that left him with the thought that novelists did not always exaggerate, that eyes *could* shine like stars. Her door closed softly.

Lanyard shook his head, as if to dissipate a swarm of pestering thoughts, and went back into his own bedchamber.

He was quite content with the explanation the girl had given, but as the victim of a methodical and pertinacious habit of mind, spent five busy minutes examining his room and all that it contained with a perseverance that would have done credit to a Frenchman searching for a mislaid sou.

If pressed, he would have been put to it to name what he sought or thought to find. What he did find was that nothing had been tampered with, and nothing more—not even so much as a dainty, lace-trimmed wisp of sheer linen bearing the lady's monogram and exhaling a faint but individual perfume.

Which, when he came to consider it, seemed hardly playing the game by the book.

As for Roddy, Lanyard wasted several minutes, now and again, listening attentively at the communicating door; but if the detective had stopped snoring, his respiration was clear enough in that quiet hour, a sound of harsh monotony.

True, that proved nothing; but Lanyard, after the fiasco of his first attempt to catch his enemy awake, was no more disposed to be hypercritical; he had his fill of being ingenious and profound. And when presently he again left Troyon's—this time without troubling the rest of the *concierge*—it was with the reflection that, if Roddy were really playing possum, he was welcome to whatever he could find in the quarters of Michael Lanyard.

CHAPTER VI

THE PACK GIVES TONGUE

Lanyard's first destination was that convenient little ground-floor apartment near the Trocadero, at the junction of the Rue Rogét and the Avenue de l'Alma; but his way thither was so roundabout that the best part of an hour was required for what might have been less than a twenty-minute taxicab course direct from Troyon's. It was past one when he arrived, afoot, at the corner.

Not that he grudged the time, for in Lanyard's esteem Bourke's epigram had come to have the weight and force of an axiom: " The more trouble you make for yourself, the less the dear public will make for you."

Paradoxically, he hadn't the least intention of attempting to deceive anybody as to his permanent address in Paris, where Michael Lanyard, connoisseur of fine paintings, was a figure too conspicuous to permit of his making a secret of his residence. De Morbihan, moreover, through recognizing him at Troyon's, had rendered it impossible for Lanyard to adopt a *nom de guerre* there, even had he thought such course advisable.

But he had certain matters to attend to before dawn, affairs demanding privacy; and while by no means sure he was followed, one can seldom be sure of anything, especially in Paris, where nothing is impossible; and it seemed as well to lose a hypothetical spy first as last. And his mind would not be at ease with respect to Roddy, thanks to De Morbihan's *gasconnade* in the hearing of the detective, and also to that hint which the count had dropped concerning a fatal blunder in the course of Lanyard's British campaign.

The adventurer could recall leaving no step uncovered. Indeed, he had prided himself on conducting his operations with a degree of circumspection unusually thorough, even for him. Yet he was unable to rid himself of those misgivings stirred up by De Morbihan's declaration that the theft of the Omber jewels had been accomplished only at cost of a clue to the thief's identity.

The count's positive information concerning the robbery proved that the news thereof had anticipated the arrival of its perpetrator in Paris.

Yet Roddy had unquestionably known nothing of it prior to its mention in his presence after dinner. Or else the detective was a finer actor than Lanyard credited.

How had De Morbihan come by the news?

Lanyard was really and profoundly perturbed.

Pestered to distraction by such thoughts he fitted key to latch and quietly let himself into his flat by a private entrance from the street, the possession of which, in addition to the usual door opening on the court and under the eye of the *concierge*, distinguished this from the ordinary Parisian apartment and rendered it doubly suited to the adventurer's uses.

Then he turned on the lights and moved quickly from room to room of the three comprising his quarters, with comprehensive glances reviewing their condition.

But, indeed, he hadn't left the reception-hall for the salon without feeling assured that things were in no respect as they ought to be—a hat he had left on the hall-rack had been moved to another peg; a chair had been shifted six inches from its ordained position, and the door of a clothes-closet, which he had locked on leaving, now stood an inch ajar.

The state of the salon, which he had

furnished as a lounge and study, and of the tiny dining-room and the bedchamber adjoining, bore out these testimonies to the fact that alien hands had thoroughly ransacked the apartment, leaving no square inch unscrutinized.

Yet he missed nothing. His rooms were a private gallery of valuable paintings and antique furniture to poison with envy the mind of any collector, and housed into the bargain a small museum of rare books, manuscripts, and minor articles of exquisite workmanship whose individuality, aside from intrinsic worth, rendered them priceless. A burglar of discrimination could have carried away in one coat-pocket loot enough to foot the bill for twelve months of profligate living. But nothing had been removed — nothing, at least, that was apparent in the first tour of inspection; which, if sweeping, was in no way superficial.

Before checking off more elaborately his mental inventory Lanyard turned attention to the protective device, a simple but exhaustive system of burglar-alarm wiring, so calculated that any attempt to enter the apartment, save by means of the key he had just employed—which fitted both doors, and of which no duplicate existed—would alarm both the *concierge* and the burglar-protective association. Though it seemed to have been in no way tampered with, to test the apparatus he raised a window opening on the court.

The lodge of the *concierge* was within ear-shot. If the alarm had been working properly Lanyard could have heard the bell from his window. He heard nothing.

With a shrug he shut the window. He knew well—none better—how such protections could be rendered valueless by a thoughtful housebreaker.

Returning to the salon, where the main body of his collection was assembled, he moved slowly from object to object, checking off items and noting their condition, with the sole result of justifying his first impression—whereas nothing had escaped handling, nothing had been removed.

As a last test he opened his desk—of which the lock proved to have been deftly picked—drew up a chair, and went through its pigeonholes.

His scanty correspondence, composed chiefly of letters exchanged with art dealers, had been scrutinized and replaced carelessly, in disorder—and here again he missed nothing; but in the end, removing a small drawer and inserting a hand in the recess, he found and pressed a spring which released a rack of pigeonholes and exposed the secret cabinet which forms an inevitable attribute of such pieces of period furniture.

A shallow box, this secret space contained one thing only, but that one of considerable value, being the leather bill-fold in which the adventurer kept a store of ready money against emergencies.

It was mostly for this, indeed, that he had come to his apartment; his London campaign having demanded an expenditure far beyond his calculations, so that he had landed in Paris with less than one hundred francs in pocket. And Lanyard, for all his pride of spirit, acknowledged one haunting fear, that of finding himself strapped in time of stress.

The fold yielded up its hoard to a sou—Lanyard removed and counted over five notes of one thousand francs and ten of twenty pounds—their sum approximating two thousand dollars.

But if nothing had been taken away, something had been added—the back of one of the Bank of England notes had been used as a blank for a memorandum.

Lanyard spread it out and studied it attentively.

The handwriting had been traced with no discernible attempt at disguise, but was quite strange to him. The pen employed had been one of those needle-pointed nibs so popular in France; the hand was that of an educated Frenchman. The substance of the memorandum translated as follows:

> To the Lone Wolf—The Pack sends greetings and extends its invitation to participate in the benefits of its fraternity. One awaits him always at l'Abbaye Thélème.

A date was added, the date of that same day.

Deliberately, when he had conned this communication, Lanyard produced his cigarette-case, selected a cigarette, struck a light, twisted the note of twenty pounds into a rude spill, set it afire, lighted his cigarette therefrom and, rising, conveyed the burning paper to a cold and empty fireplace, where he permitted it to burn to a crisp, black ash.

When this was done his smile broke through his clouding scowl.

"Well, my friend!" he informed the

author of that document which now could never prove incriminating—" at all events, I have you to thank for a new sensation. It has long been my ambition to feel warranted in lighting a cigarette with a twenty-pound note, if the whim ever seized me!"

His smile faded slowly; the frown replaced it — something more valuable to him than a hundred dollars had just gone up in smoke.

CHAPTER VII

SUSPENSE

His secret uncovered, all that laboriously constructed edifice of art and chicane which yesterday had seemed so impregnable a wall between the Lone Wolf and the world to-day torn asunder, Lanyard wasted time neither in profitless lamentation or any other sort of repining.

He had much to do before morning; to determine as definitely as might be possible who had fathomed his secret and how; to calculate what chance he still had of pursuing his career without exposure and disaster; and to arrange, if investigation verified his expectations, which were of the gloomiest, to withdraw in good order, with all the honors of war, from that dangerous field.

Delaying only long enough to revise plans, he put out the lights and left by the courtyard door; for it was just possible that those whose sardonic whim it had been to name themselves " the Pack " might have stationed agents in the street to follow their dissocial brother in crime. And now, more than ever, Lanyard was firmly bent on going his own way unwatched.

His course first led him stealthily past the door of the porter and across the court to the public hallway in the main body of the building. Happily there were no lights to betray him had any one been awake to notice. For, thanks to Parisian notions of economy, even the best apartment-houses dispense with elevator-boys and with lights that burn up real money every hour of the night. By pressing a button beside the door on entering, however, Lanyard could have obtained illumination in the hallways for five minutes, or long enough to enable any tenant to find his front door and the keyhole therein; at the end of which period the lamps would automatically have extinguished themselves.

Or, by entering a narrow-chested box, about the dimensions of a generous coffin, and pressing a button bearing the number of the floor at which he wished to alight, he could have been comfortably wafted aloft without sign of more human agency. But he availed himself, prudently, of neither of these conveniences. Afoot, and in complete darkness, he made his ascent of five flights of winding stairs, pausing at length before the door of an apartment on the sixth floor. A flash from a pocket-lamp located the keyhole; the key turned without a sound; the door swung on silent hinges.

Once inside, the adventurer moved more freely, with less precaution against noise. He was on known ground, and alone; the apartment, though furnished, was untenanted, and would so remain as long as Lanyard continued to pay the rent from London under an assumed name.

It was the convenience of this refuge and avenue of retreat, indeed, that had dictated his choice of this particular floor, for the sixth-story flat had one invaluable feature—a window opening on the roof of the adjoining building.

Two minutes' examination sufficed to convince Lanyard that here at least the Pack had not trespassed.

Five minutes later he picked the common lock of a door opening from the roof of an apartment-house on the farthest corner of the block, found his way downstairs, knocked on the door of the porter's lodge, chanted that venerable open sesame of Paris, "*Cordon, si'l vous plaît!*" and was made free of the street by a worthy *concierge* too sleepy to challenge the identity of this late-departing guest.

He walked three blocks, picked up a taxicab, and in ten minutes more was set down at the Gare des Invalides.

Passing through the station without pause, he took to the streets afoot, following the Boulevard St. Germain to the Rue du Bac; a brief walk up this time-worn thoroughfare brought him to the ample, open, and unguarded *porte-cochère* of a roomy court walled with beetling, ancient tenements.

Assuring himself that the courtyard was deserted, Lanyard addressed himself to a door on the right; to his knock it swung promptly ajar with a click of its latch. At the same time the adventurer produced from beneath his cloak a small black velvet vizor and adjusted it to mask the upper portion of his face. Then, entering a narrow and odorous corridor, whose obscurity was only emphasized by a lonely, guttering candle, he turned the knob of the first door and walked into a small, ill-furnished room.

A spare-bodied young man, who had been sitting at a desk, reading by the light of an oil-lamp with a heavy green shade, rose and bowed courteously.

"Good morning, *monsieur*," he said with the cordiality of one who greets an acquaintance of old standing. "Be seated," he added, indicating an armchair beside the desk. "It is some time since I have had the honor of a call from *monsieur*."

"That is so," Lanyard admitted, sitting down.

The young man followed suit. The lamplight, striking across his face beneath the greenish penumbra of the shade, discovered a countenance of Hebraic cast.

"*Monsieur* has something to show me, eh?"

"But naturally."

Lanyard's reply just escaped a flavor of curtness—as who should say, "What did you expect?" He was puzzled by something strange and new in the attitude of this young man, a trace of reserve and constraint.

They had been meeting in this manner for several years, conducting their secret and lawless business according to a formula invented by Bourke and religiously observed by Lanyard. A note or telegram of innocent superficial intent, addressed to a certain member of a leading firm of jewelers in Amsterdam, was the invariable signal for meetings such as this, which were always held in the same place, at an indeterminate hour after midnight, between this intelligent, cultivated, and well-mannered young Jew and the thief in his mask.

In such wise did the Lone Wolf dispose of the bulk of his loot; other channels were, of course, open to him, but none so safe; and with no other receiver of stolen goods could he hope to make such fair and profitable deals.

Now, inevitably, in the course of this long association, though each remained in ignorance of the other's identity, these two had come to feel that they knew each other fairly well. Not infrequently, when their business had been transacted, Lanyard would linger an hour with the agent, chatting over cigarettes—both, perhaps, a little thrilled by the piquancy of the situation, for the young Jew was the only man who had ever wittingly met the Lone Wolf face to face.

Why, then, this sudden awkwardness and embarrassment on the part of the agent?

Lanyard's eyes narrowed with suspicion.

In silence he produced a jewel-case of morocco leather and gave it to the Jew, then settled back in his chair, his attitude one of lounging, but his mind as uneasy with distrust as his fingers which, under cover of his cloak, rested close to the pocket containing his automatic.

Accepting the box with a little bow, the Jew pressed the catch and uncovered its contents. But the richness of the treasure thus disclosed did not seem to surprise him; and, indeed, he had more than once been introduced with no more formality to plunder of greater value. Fitting a jeweler's magnifying-glass to his eye, he picked up one after another of the pieces and examined them under the lamplight. Presently he replaced the last and shut down the cover of the box.

He turned a thoughtful countenance to Lanyard, made as if to speak, but hesitated.

"Well?" the adventurer demanded impatiently.

"This, I take it," said the Jew absently, tapping the box, "is the jewelry of Mme. Omber."

"*I* took it," Lanyard retorted good-humoredly—"not to put too fine a point upon it!"

"I am sorry," the other said slowly.

"Yes?"

"It is most unfortunate—"

"May I inquire what is most unfortunate?"

The Jew shrugged, and with the tips of his fingers gently pushed the box toward his customer.

"This makes me very unhappy," he admitted; "but I have no choice in the matter, *monsieur*. As the agent of my principals, I am instructed to refuse you an offer for these valuables."

"Why?"

Again the shrug, accompanied by a

deprecatory grimace: "That is difficult to say. No explanation was made me. My instructions were merely to keep this appointment as usual, but to advise you that it would be impossible for my principals to continue their relations with you as long as your affairs remained in their present status."

"Their present status?" Lanyard repeated. "What does that mean?"

"I cannot say, *monsieur*. I can only repeat that which was said to me."

After a moment Lanyard rose, took the box and replaced it in his pocket.

"Very well," he said quietly. "Your principals, of course, understand that this action on their part definitely ends our relations rather than merely interrupts them at their whim?"

"I am desolated, *monsieur*, but — one must assume that they have considered everything. You understand, it is a matter in which I am wholly without discretion, I trust?"

"Oh, quite!" Lanyard assented carelessly. He held out his hand. "Good-by, my friend."

The Jew shook hands warmly.

"Good night, *monsieur* — and the best of luck!"

There was a significance in his last words that Lanyard did not trouble to analyze. Beyond doubt the man knew more than he dared admit. And the adventurer told himself he could shrewdly surmise most of that which the other had felt constrained to leave unspoken.

Pressure from some quarter had been brought to bear upon that eminently respectable firm of jewel merchants in Amsterdam to force them to discontinue their clandestine relations with the Lone Wolf, profitable though these must have been.

Lanyard believed he could name the quarter whence this pressure was being exerted, but before going further or coming to any momentous decision, he was determined to know to a certainty who were arrayed against him and how much importance he need attach to their antagonism. If he didn't, it would be the fault of the other side, not his, for want of readiness to accept its invitation.

In brief, he didn't for an instant contemplate abandoning either his rigid rule of solitude or his chosen career without a fight; and he preferred not to fight in the dark.

Anger burned in him no less hotly than chagrin. It could hardly be otherwise with one who, so long suffered to go his way without discovery or hindrance, now suddenly, in the course of a few brief hours, found himself brought up with a round turn—hemmed in and menaced on every side by secret opposition and hostility.

He no longer feared to be watched; and the very fact that, as far as he could see, he wasn't watched, only added fuel to his resentment, demonstrating as it did so patently the cynical assurance of the Pack that it had him cornered, without alternative other than to meet its wishes.

To the driver of the first taxicab he met he said: "l'Abbaye"; then, shutting himself within the conveyance, he surrendered to the most morose reflections.

Nothing of this mood was, however, apparent in his manner on alighting. He bore a countenance of amiable insouciance through the portals of this festal institution, whose proudest boast and, incidentally, sole claim to uniqueness is that it never opens its doors before midnight nor closes them before dawn.

He had moved about with such celerity since entering his flat on the Rue Rogét that it was even now only two o'clock, an hour at which revelry might be expected to have reached its apogee in this, the *soi-disant* smartest place in Paris.

A less sophisticated adventurer might have been flattered by the cordiality of his reception at the hands of the *maître d'hôtel*.

"Ah-h, M. Lanyar'! But it is long since we have been so favored. However, I have kept your table for you."

"Have you, indeed?"

"Could it be otherwise, after receipt of your honored order?"

"No," said Lanyard coolly, "I presume not, if you value your peace of mind."

"*Monsieur* is alone?"—this with an accent of disappointment.

"Temporarily, perhaps."

"But this way, if you please."

In the wake of the functionary Lanyard traversed that frowzy anteroom, where doubtful wasters are herded on suspicion in company with the corps of automatic bacchanalians and *figurantes,* to the main restaurant, the inner sanctum toward which the naive soul of the travel-bitten Anglo-Saxon aspires so ardently.

It was not a large room; irregularly

pentagonal in shape, lined with wall-seats behind a close-set rank of tables; better lighted than most Parisian restaurants, that is to say, less glaringly; ill-ventilated; the open space in the middle of the floor devoted to a handful of haggard young professional dancers, their stunted bodies more or less costumed in brilliant colors, footing it with all the vivacity to be expected of five francs per night per head; the tables occupied by parties Anglo-Saxon and French in the proportion of five to one, served by a company of bored and apathetic waiters; a string orchestra ragging incessantly; a vicious buck-nigger on a dais shining with self-complacency while he vamped and shouted: "Waitin' foh th' Robuht E. Lee."

Lanyard permitted himself to be penned in a corner behind a table, told the waiter to bring him champagne—not because he wanted it, but because it was etiquette—suppressed a yawn, lighted a cigarette, and reviewed the assemblage with a languid but shrewd glance.

He saw only the company of every night—for even in the off season there are always enough English-speaking people in Paris to make it possible for l'Abbaye Thêléme to keep open with profit—the inevitable assortment of respectable married couples with their friends, the men chafing and wondering if possibly all this might seem less unattractive were they foot-loose and fancy-free, the women contriving to seem at ease with varying degrees of success, but one and all flushed with dubiety; the sprinkling of demi-mondaines not in the least concerned about *their* social status; the handful of people who, having brought their fun with them, were having the good time they would have had anywhere; the scattering of plain drunks in evening dress. Nowhere a face that Lanyard recognized definitely — no Mr. Bannon, no Comte Remy de Morbihan.

He regarded this circumstance, however, with more vexation than surprise—De Morbihan would surely show up in time; meanwhile it was annoying to be obliged to wait, to endure this martyrdom of *ennui*.

He sipped his wine sparingly, without relish, considering the single subsidiary fact which did impress him with some wonder—that he was being left severely to himself; something which doesn't often fall to the lot of the unattached male at l'Abbaye. Evidently an order had been issued with respect to him. Ordinarily he would have been grateful, to-night he was merely irritated; it rendered him conspicuous.

The fixed round of delirious *divertissement* unfolded — as per schedule. The lights were lowered to provide a melodramatic atmosphere for that startling novelty, the Apache Dance. The coon shouted stridently. The dancers danced bravely on their poor, tired feet. An odious dwarf creature in a miniature outfit of evening clothes toddled from table to table, making himself offensive in his hunt for stray francs—but shied from the look in Lanyard's eyes.

Lackeys made the rounds, presenting each guest with a handful of colored, feather-weight celluloid balls with which to bombard strangers across the room. The inevitable shamefaced Englishman departed in tow of an overdressed woman with pride of conquest in her smirk. The equally inevitable alcoholic was dug out from under his table and thrown into a cab. An American girl insisted on climbing upon a table to dance, but swayed and had to be helped down, giggling foolishly. A Spanish dancing girl was given a clear floor for her specialty—which consisted in singing several verses understood by nobody — and emphasized her vivacity by making frantic dashes at and rumpling the hair of several variously surprised, indignant, and flattered male guests—among these Lanyard, who submitted with resignation.

And then, just when he was on the point of consigning the Pack to the devil for inflicting upon him such cruel and inhuman punishment, the Spanish girl picked her way through the mob of dancers who had now invaded the floor and paused beside his table.

"You're not angry, *mon coco?*" she pleaded with a provocative smile.

Smilingly Lanyard returned a negative.

"Then I may sit down with you and drink a glass of your wine?"

"Can't you see I've been saving the bottle for you?"

The woman plumped herself promptly into the chair opposite the adventurer. He filled her a glass.

"But you are not happy to-night?" she demanded, staring over the brim as she sipped.

"I am thoughtful," he said.

"And what does that mean?"

"I am saddened to contemplate the infirmities of my countrymen, these Americans who can't rest in Paris until they find some place as deadly as any Broadway boasts, these English who adore beautiful Paris solely because here they may continue to get drunk publicly after half past twelve!"

"Ah, then it's you are bored, is it not?" said the girl, gingerly stroking her faded, painted cheek.

"It is true; I am bored."

"Then why not go where you are wanted?" She drained her glass at a gulp and jumped up, swirling her skirts. "Your cab is waiting, *monsieur*—and perhaps you may find it more amusing with that Pack!"

Flinging herself into the arms of another dancing girl, she swung away, grinning impishly at Lanyard over her partner's shoulder.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HIGH HAND

Evidently his first move toward departure was signaled, for as he passed out through l'Abbaye's doors the carriage-porter darted forward and saluted.

"M. Lanyar'?"

"Yes?"

"*Monsieur's* car is waiting."

"Indeed!" Lanyard surveyed briefly a handsome black limousine that, at pause beside the curb, was champing its bit in the most spirited fashion. Then he smiled appreciatively. "All the same, I thank you for the compliment," he added, and forthwith tipped the porter.

But before entrusting himself to this gratuitous conveyance he put himself to the trouble of inspecting the chauffeur, who proved to be a capable-looking mechanic togged out in rich black livery which, though relieved by a vast amount of silk braiding, was, like the car in his charge, guiltless of any sort of insignia.

"I presume you know where I want to go, my man?"

The chauffeur touched his cap: "But naturally, *monsieur.*"

"Then take me there the quickest way."

Nodding acknowledgment of the porter's parting salute, Lanyard sank gratefully back upon uncommonly luxurious upholstery. The fatigue of the last thirty-six hours was beginning to tell on him, though his youth was still so vital, so instinct with strength and vigor that he could, if need be, go as long again without sleep.

None the less he was glad of this opportunity to snatch a few moments' rest by way of preparation against the occult culmination of this adventure. No telling what might ensue of this violation of all those principles which had hitherto insured his welfare!

However, he stood committed to his folly, if folly it were—he would play the game as it laid.

As for curiosity concerning his immediate destination, there was little enough of that in his temper, thanks to the fact that a single glance round on leaving the car would fix his whereabouts beyond question, so thoroughgoing was his knowledge of Paris.

He contemplated briefly, with admiration, the simplicity with which that affair at l'Abbaye had been managed, finding no just cause to suspect any one there of criminal complicity in the plans of the Pack—a forged order for a table to the *maître d'hôtel,* ten francs to the carriage-porter, and twenty more to the dancing woman to play their parts in a putative practical joke — and the thing was arranged without implicating a soul!

Of a sudden, ending a ride much shorter than he would have liked, the limousine swerved in toward a curb.

Bending forward, Lanyard unlatched the door and, glancing through the window, uttered a grunt of profound disgust.

If this were the best that Pack could do—

He had hoped for something a trifle more romantic from men with wit and imagination enough to plot the earlier phases of this adventure.

The car was pulling up in front of an institution which he knew well, far too well, indeed, for his own good.

None the less he consented to get out.

"Sure you've come to the right address?" he asked the chauffeur.

Two fingers touching the vizor of his cap: "But certainly, *monsieur!*"

"Oh, all right!" Lanyard grumbled resignedly, and tossing a five-franc piece, addressed himself to the entrance of an outwardly commonplace and respectable *hôtel particulier* situate in the Rue Chaptal between the *impasse* of the Grand Guignol and the Rue Pigalle.

Now the neophyte needs the introduction of a trusted sponsor before he can win admission to the clubhouse in the Rue Chaptal of the exclusive Circle of Friends of Humanity; but Lanyard's knock secured him prompt and unquestioned entrance. The unfortunate fact is he was a member in the best of standing, for this society of pseudo-altruistic aims was nothing more nor less than one of those several private gambling clubs of Paris which the French government tolerates more or less openly, despite adequate restrictive legislation; and gambling was Lanyard's ruling passion—a legacy from Bourke together with the rest of his professional equipment.

To every man his vice—the argument is Bourke's, in defense of his failing—and perhaps the least mischievous vice a professional cracksman can indulge is that of gambling, since it can hardly drive him to lengths more desperate than those whereby he gains his daily livelihood.

In the esteem of Paris Count Remy de Morbihan himself was scarcely a more light-hearted plunger than M. Lanyard.

Naturally, with this reputation, he was always free of the handsome salons wherein the Friends of Humanity devoted themselves to roulette, auction bridge, baccarat, and *chemin de fer* — and of this freedom he now proceeded to avail himself, with his hat just a shade aslant on his head, his hands in his pockets, a suspicion of a smile on his lips, and a glint of the devil in his eyes—in all an expression accurately reflecting the latest phase of his humor, which had become largely one of contemptuous toleration, thanks to what he chose to consider an exhibition of insipid stupidity on the part of the Pack.

Nor was this humor in any way modified when, in due course, he confirmed anticipation by discovering M. le Comte Remy de Morbihan lounging beside one of the roulette-tables, watching the play and now and then risking a *maximum* or two on his own account.

A flash of animation crossed the unlovely mask of the count when he saw Lanyard approaching, and he greeted the adventurer with a gay little flirt of his pudgy, dark hand.

"Ah, my friend!" he cried. "It is you, then, who have changed your mind! But this is delightful!"

"And what has become of your American friend?" asked the adventurer.

"He tired quickly, that one, and packed himself off to Troyon's. Be sure I didn't press him to continue the grand tour!"

"Then you really wanted to see me tonight?" Lanyard inquired innocently.

"Always—always, my dear Lanyard!" the count declared, jumping up. "But come," he insisted, "I have a word for your private ear, if these gentlemen will excuse us."

"Do!" Lanyard addressed in confidential tone those he knew at the table before turning away to the tug of the count's hand on his arm—"I think he means to pay up twenty pounds he owes me!"

Some derisive laughter greeted this sally.

"I mean that, however," Lanyard informed the other cheerfully, as they moved away to a corner where conversation without an audience was possible—"you ruined that Bank of England note, you know."

"Cheap at the price!" the count protested, producing his bill-fold. "Five hundred francs for an introduction to *monsieur*, the Lone Wolf!"

"Are you joking?" Lanyard asked blankly, and with a magnificent gesture abolished the proffered bank-note.

"Joking? I! But surely you don't mean to deny—"

"My friend," Lanyard interrupted, "before we assert or deny anything, let us gather the rest of the players round the table and deal from a sealed deck. Meantime, let us rest on the understanding that I have found, at one end, a message scrawled on a bank-note hidden in a secret place, at the other end, yourself, M. le Comte. Between and beyond these points exists a mystery, of which one anticipates elucidation."

"You shall have it," De Morbihan promised. "But first we must go to find those others who await us."

"Not so fast!" Lanyard interposed. "What am I to understand? That you wish me to accompany you to the—ah—den of the Pack?"

"Where else?" De Morbihan grinned.

"But where is it?"

"I am not permitted to say—"

"Still one has one's eyes. Why not satisfy me here?"

"Your eyes, by your leave, *monsieur,* will be blindfolded."

"Impossible."

"Pardon—it is an essential—"

"Come, come, my friend—we are not in the Middle Ages!"

"I have no discretion, *monsieur.* My *confrères*—"

"I insist, there must be trust on both sides, or no negotiations."

"But I assure you, my dear friend—"

"My dear count, it is useless. I am determined. Blindfold? I should say not! This is not—need I remind you again?—the Paris of Balzac and that wonderful Dumas of yours!"

"What do you propose, then?" De Morbihan inquired, worrying his mustache.

"What better place for the proposed conference than here?"

"But not here, *monsieur!*"

"Why not? Everybody comes here—it will cause no gossip. I am here—I have come half-way; your friends must do as much on their part."

"It is not possible."

"Then tender them my regrets."

"Would you give us away?"

"Never that—one makes gifts to one's friends only. But my interest in yours is depreciating so rapidly that, should you delay much longer, it will be on sale for the sum of two sous."

"Oh — damn!" the count complained peevishly.

"With all the pleasure in life. But now," Lanyard went on, rising to end the interview, "you must forgive me for reminding you that the morning wanes apace. I shall be going home in another hour."

De Morbihan shrugged. "Out of my great affection for you," he purred venomously, "I will do my possible. But I can promise nothing."

"I have every confidence in your powers of moral suasion, *monsieur,*" Lanyard assured him cheerfully. "*Au revoir!*"

And with this, not at all ill-pleased with himself, he strutted off to an adjoining table where a high-strung session of *chemin de fer* was in process, possessed himself of a vacant chair, and in two minutes was so engrossed in the game that the Pack was quite forgotten.

In fifteen minutes he had won thrice as many thousands of francs.

Twenty minutes or half an hour later a hand on his shoulder broke the grasp of his besetting passion.

"Our table is made up, my friend," De Morbihan announced with his inextinguishable grin. "We're waiting only for you."

"Quite at your service."

Settling his score, and finding himself considerably better off than he had imagined, he resigned his place gracefully and suffered the count to link arms and drag him away up the main staircase to the second story, where smaller rooms were set apart for parties who preferred to gamble privately.

"So it appears you succeeded!" he chaffed his conductor good-humoredly.

"I have brought you the mountain," De Morbihan assented.

"One is grateful for small miracles."

But De Morbihan wouldn't laugh at his own expense; for a moment, indeed, he seemed inclined to take umbrage at Lanyard's levity. But the sudden squaring of his broad shoulders and the hardening of his features was quickly modified by an uneasy, sidelong glance at his companion. And then they were at the door of the *cabinet particulier.*

De Morbihan rapped, turned the knob, and stood aside, bowing politely.

With a nod acknowledging the courtesy, Lanyard consented to precede him and entered a room of intimate proportions, furnished chiefly with a green-covered card-table and five easy chairs, of which three were occupied—two by men in evening dress, the third by one in a well-tailored lounge suit of dark gray.

All three men wore vizors of black velvet.

Lanyard looked from one to the other and chuckled quietly.

De Morbihan cleared his throat angrily and with an aggrieved air launched into introductions:

"*Messieurs,* I have the honor to present to you our *confrère,* M. Lanyard, best known as 'the Lone Wolf.' M. Lanyard—the council of our association, known to you as 'the Pack.'"

The three rose and bowed ceremoniously. Lanyard returned a cool, good-natured nod. Then he laughed again and more openly:

"A pack of knaves!"

"*Monsieur* doubtless feels at ease?" one retorted acidly.

"In your company, Popinot? But hardly!" Lanyard returned in light contempt.

The fellow thus indicated, a burly rogue of a Frenchman in rusty and baggy evening clothes, started and flushed hotly beneath his mask; but the man next him dropped a restraining hand upon his arm, and Popinot turned, shrugged, and sank back into his chair.

"Upon my word!" Lanyard declared gracelessly—"it's as good as a play! Are you sure, M. le Comte, there's no mistake—that these gay masqueraders haven't lost their way to the stage of the Grand Guignol?"

"Damn!" muttered the count. "Take care, my friend! You go too far!"

"You really think so? But you amaze me! You, in reason, can't expect me to take you seriously, gentlemen!"

"If you don't, it will prove serious business for you, my friend!" growled the one he had named Popinot.

"You mean that? But you are magnificent, all of you! We lack only the solitary illumination of a candle-end—a grinning skull—a cup of blood upon the table—to make the farce complete! But as it is, *messieurs,* you must be rarely uncomfortable, and feeling as foolish as you look into the bargain! Moreover, I'm not a child. Popinot, why not disburden your amiable features? And you, Mr. Wertheimer, I'm sure, will feel more at ease with an open countenance—as the saying runs," he said, nodding to the man beside Popinot. "As for this gentleman," he concluded, eying the third, "I haven't the pleasure of his acquaintance."

With a short laugh Wertheimer unmasked, exposing a face of decidedly English type, fair and well-modeled, betraying only the faintest traces of Semitic cast to account for his surname. And with this example Popinot snatched off his own black vizor and glared at Lanyard—in his shabby dress the incarnate essence of *bourgeois* outraged. But the third, he of the gray lounge suit, remained motionless; his eyes clashed with the adventurer's.

He seemed a man little, if at all, Lanyard's senior, and built upon much the same lines. A close-clipped black mustache ornamented his upper lip. His chin was square and strong with character. The cut of his clothing was conspicuously neither English nor continental.

"I don't know you, sir," Lanyard continued slowly, puzzled to account for a feeling of familiarity with this person whom he could have sworn he had never met before. "But you won't let your friends outdo you in civility, I trust?"

"If you mean you want me to unmask, I won't," the other returned bruskly in fair French, if with a decided transatlantic intonation.

"American, eh?"

"Native-born, if it interests you."

"Have I ever met you before?"

"You have not."

"My dear count," Lanyard said, turning to De Morbihan, "do me the favor to introduce this gentleman."

"Your dear count will do nothing of the sort, Mr. Lanyard. If you need a name to call me by, Smith's good enough."

The incisive force of his enunciation carried out consistently the general habit of the man. Lanyard recognized a nature no more pliable than his own. Idle to give time to bickering with this one.

"It doesn't matter," he said shortly, and drawing back a chair, sat down. "If it did, I should insist—or else decline the honor of receiving the addresses of this cosmopolitan committee. Truly, you flatter me. Here we have Mr. Wertheimer, representing the swell-mobsmen across Channel; M. le Comte standing for the *gratin* of Paris—and *vice versa;* Popinot, spokesman for our friends, the Apaches, and the well-known Mr. Goodenough Smith, ambassador of the gunmen of New York—apparently. A most auspicious occasion! But I presume I'm to understand you wait upon me mainly as representing the fine flower of the European underworld?"

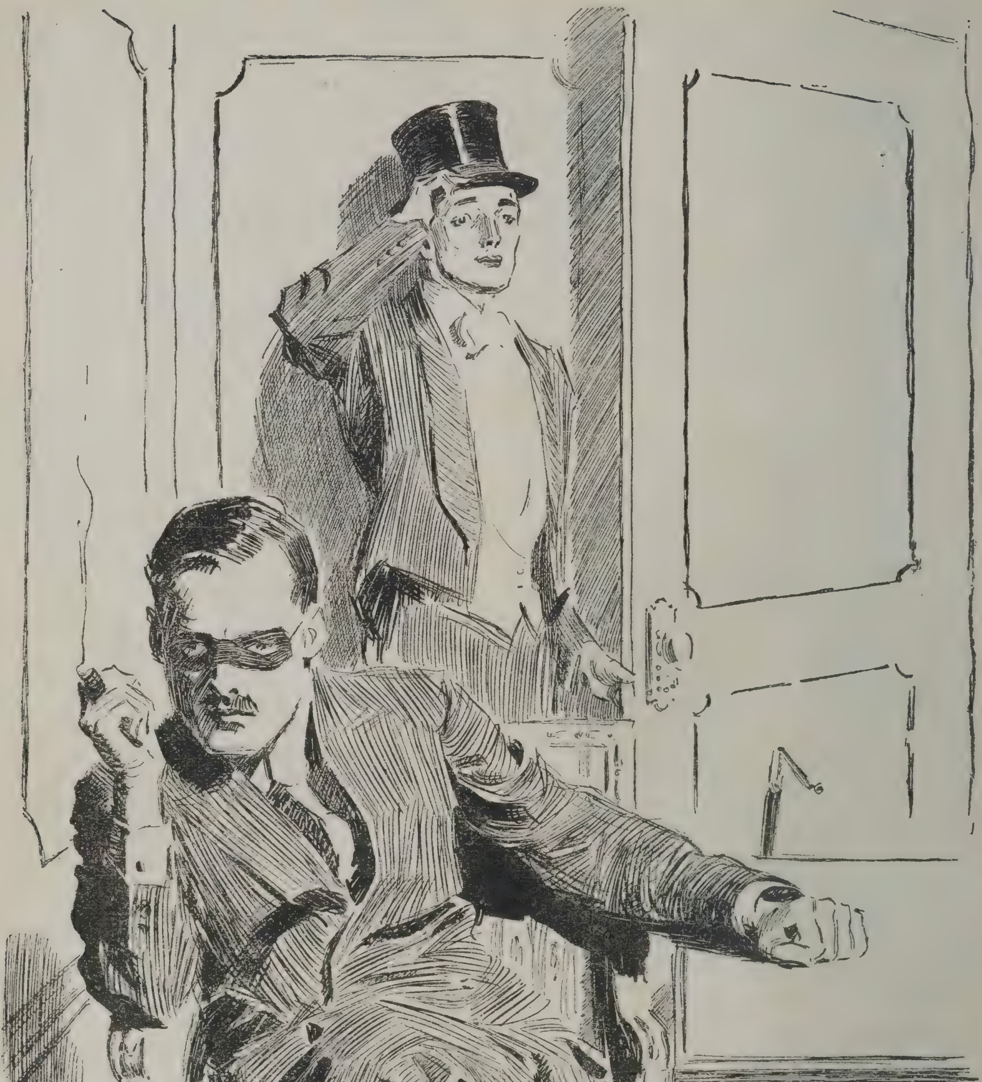
"You're to understand that I, for one, don't like your impudence," the stout Popinot snapped.

"Sorry. But I have already indicated my inability to take you seriously."

"Why not?" the American demanded ominously. "You'd be sore enough if we took you as a joke, wouldn't you?"

"You misapprehend, Mr.—ah—Smith; it is my first aim and wish that you do not take me in any manner, shape, or form. It is you, remember, who requested this interview and—er—dressed your parts so strikingly!"

"What are we to understand by that?" De Morbihan interposed.



HE OPENED THE DOOR, TURNED, AND SALUTED THEM WITH SARCASTIC PUNCTILIO

"This, *messieurs*—if you must know." Lanyard dropped for the moment his tone of raillery and bent forward, emphasizing his points by tapping the table with a forefinger. "Through some oversight of mine, or cleverness of yours—I can't say which, perhaps both — you have succeeded in penetrating my secret. What then? You become envious of my success. In short, I stand in your light—I'm always getting away with something you might have lifted if you'd only had wit enough to think of it first. As your American *confrère*, Mr. Mysterious Smith, would say, I 'cramp your style.'"

"You learned that on Broadway," the other commented shrewdly.

"Possibly. To continue: So you get together and bite your nails until you concoct a plan to frighten me into sharing

"I HAVE THE HONOR TO BID ADIEU TO MESSIEURS, THE COUNCIL OF—THE PACK"

profits with you. I've no doubt you're prepared to allow me to retain one-half the proceeds of my operations should I elect to ally myself to you?"

"That's the suggestion we were empowered to make," De Morbihan admitted.

"In other words, you need me. You say to yourselves: 'We'll pretend to be the head of a criminal syndicate, such as the silly novelists are forever writing about, and we'll threaten to put him out of business unless he comes to our terms.' But you overlook one important fact: that you are not mentally equipped to get away with this amusing impersonation! What! Do you expect me to accept you as leading spirits of a gigantic criminal system—you, Popinot, who live by standing between the police and your murderous rats of Belleville, or you, Wertheimer, sneak-thief and blackmailer of timid women, or you, De Morbihan, because you eke out your income by showing a handful of second-story men where to seek plunder in the houses of your friends?"

He made a gesture of impatience and lounged back to await the answer to this indictment. His gaze, ranging the four, encountered but one face that was not darkly flushed with resentment, and this was the American's.

"Aren't you forgetting me?" this last suggested gently.

"On the contrary. I refuse to recognize you in this conference as long as you lack courage to show your face."

"As you will, my friend," the American chuckled. "Make your profit out of that any way you like."

Lanyard sat up again. "Well, I've stated your case. It amounts to simple, clumsy blackmail. I'm to split my earnings with you or you'll denounce me to the police. That's about it, isn't it?"

"Not of necessity," De Morbihan purred softly, twisting his mustache.

"For my part," Popinot declared hotly, "I engage that *monsieur* of the high hand here will either work with us or conduct no more operations in Paris."

"Or in New York," the American amended.

"England is yet to be heard from," Lanyard suggested mockingly.

To this Wertheimer replied, almost with diffidence: "If you ask me, I don't think you'd find it so jolly pleasant over there if you mean to cut up nasty at this end."

"Then what am I to infer? If you're afraid to lay an information against me—and it wouldn't be wise, I admit—you'll merely cause me to be assassinated, eh?"

"Not of necessity," the count murmured in the same thoughtful tone and manner, as one with a trump in reserve.

"There are so many ways of arranging these matters," Wertheimer ventured.

"None the less, if I refuse, you declare war?"

"Something like that," the American admitted.

"In that case—I am now able to state my position definitely." Lanyard got up and grinned provokingly down at the group. "You can—all four of you—go plumb to hell!"

"My dear friend!" the count cried, shocked, "you forget—"

"I forget nothing!" Lanyard cut in coldly, "and my decision is final. Consider yourselves at liberty to go ahead and do your damnedest! But don't forget that it is you who have been the aggressors. Already you've had the insolence to interfere with my arrangements—you began offensive operations before you declared war. So now, if you're hit beneath the belt, you mustn't complain—you've asked for it!"

"Now just what do you mean by that?" the American drawled with an accent of irony.

"I leave you to figure it out for yourselves. But I will say this: I confidently expect you to decide to live and let live, and shall be sorry, as you'll certainly be sorry, if you force my hand."

He opened the door, turned, and saluted them with sarcastic punctilio.

"I have the honor to bid adieu to *messieurs*, the council of—the Pack!"

CHAPTER IX

DISASTER

Having fulfilled his purpose of making himself acquainted with the individuals composing the opposition, Lanyard shut the door in their faces, thrust his hands in his pockets, and sauntered down-stairs, chuckling, his nose in the air, on the best of terms with himself.

True, the fat was in the fire and well ablaze—he had to look to himself now and go warily in the shadow of their enmity. But it was something to have faced down those four, if he wasn't seriously impressed by any one of them.

Popinot, perhaps, was the most dangerous, a vindictive animal, and the creatures he controlled a murderous lot—drug-ridden, drink-bedeviled, vicious little rats of Belleville, who'd knife a man for the price of an absinth. But Popinot wouldn't move without leave from De Morbihan, and unless Lanyard's calculations were seriously miscast, De Morbihan would restrain both himself and his associates until thoroughly convinced Lanyard was impregnable against every form of suasion.

Murder was something a bit out of De Morbihan's line — something which, at least, he could be counted on to hold in reserve. And by the time he was ready to employ it, Lanyard would be well beyond his reach. Wertheimer, too, would deprecate violence until all else had failed; his half-caste type was cowardly, and cowards kill only impulsively, before they've had time to weigh the consequences. There remained "Smith"—enigma; a man apparently gifted with both intelligence and character. But if so, what the deuce was *he* doing in such company?

Still, there he was—and the association damned him. His sort were all of a piece, beneath the consideration of men of spirit.

At this point the self-complaisance bred of Lanyard's contempt for Messrs. de Morbihan & Co. bred, in its turn, a thought that brought the adventurer up standing.

The devil! Who was he, Michael Lanyard, that held himself above such vermin, yet lived in such a way as practically to invite their advances? What right was his to resent their opening the door to confraternity, as long as he trod paths so closely parallel to theirs that only a sophist might discriminate them? What comforting distinction was to be drawn between on the one hand a blackmailer like Wertheimer, a two-faced scoundrel like De Morbihan, or a patron of Apaches like Popinot, and on the other himself, whose bread was eaten in the sweat of thievery?

He drew a long face, whistled softly, shook his head, and grinned a wry grin.

"Glad I didn't think of that two minutes ago, or I'd never have had the cheek."

Without warning he found himself beset by a recurrent memory of the girl, Lucia Bannon.

For an instant he saw her again, quite vividly, as last he had seen her—turning at the door of her bedchamber to look back at him, a vision of perturbing charm in a rose-silk dressing-gown, with rich hair loosened, cheeks softly glowing, eyes brilliant with an emotion inscrutable to her one beholder.

What had been the message of those eyes flashed down the dimly lighted length of that corridor at Troyon's ere she vanished?

Adieu? Or *au revoir?*

She had termed him, naively enough, a gentleman.

But if she had known—even dreamed—he was what he was?

He shook his head again, but now impatiently, with a scowl and a grumble:

"What's the matter with me, anyway? Mooning over a girl I never saw before to-night! As if it matters a whoop in Hepsidam *what* she thinks! Or is it possible I'm beginning to develop a rudimentary conscience at this late day? *Me!*"

If there were anything in this hypothesis, the growing pains of that late-blooming conscience were soon enough forgotten in the hypnotic spell woven by clattering chips, the singing of an ivory ball in an ebony race, the croaking of croupiers.

For Lanyard's place at the table of *chemin de fer* had been filled by another, and, too impatient to await a vacancy, he wandered on to the salon dedicated to roulette, tested his luck by staking a note of five hundred francs on the black, won, and incontinently subsided into a chair and oblivion for the space of three-quarters of an hour.

At the end of that period he found himself minus his heavy winnings at *chemin de fer* and the ten thousand francs of his reserve fund as well.

By way of a lining to his pockets there remained precisely the sum which he had brought into Paris that same evening, less subsequent general expenses.

The experience was no novelty in his history. He rose, less resentful than regretful that his ill-luck obliged him to quit just when play was growing most interesting, and resignedly sought the cloakroom.

And there he found De Morbihan—again!—standing all garmented for the street, mouthing a huge cigar and wearing a look of impatient discontent.

"At last!" he cried in an aggrieved tone as Lanyard appeared. "You do take your time, my friend!"

Lanyard smothered with a smile whatever emotion was his.

"I don't suppose you really meant to wait for me," he parried, with double meaning, both to humor De Morbihan and hoodwink the attendant.

"What do you think?" retorted the count with asperity—"that I'm willing to stand by and let you moon round Paris at this hour of the morning, hunting for a taxicab that isn't there and running God knows what risk of being stuck up by some misbegotten Apache? But I should say not! I mean to take you home in my car, though it cost me a half-hour of beauty-sleep not lightly to be forfeited at my age!"

The significance that underlay the semi-humorous petulance of the little man was not wasted.

"You're most amiable, M. le Comte!" Lanyard said thoughtfully, while the attendant produced his hat and coat. "But now, if you're ready, I won't delay you longer."

In another moment they were outside the clubhouse, its doors closed behind them, while before them, waiting at the curb, was that same handsome black limousine which had brought the adventurer from l'Abbaye.

Two swift glances, right and left, showed him an empty street, destitute of hint of danger.

"One moment, *monsieur!*" he said, detaining the count with a touch on his sleeve. "It's only right that I should advise you. I'm armed."

"Then you're less foolhardy than one feared. If such things interest you, I don't mind admitting I carry a life-preserver of my own. But what of that? Is one eager to go shooting, at this time of night, for the sheer fun of explaining to the police that one has been attacked by Apaches? Providing one lived to explain!"

"It's as bad as that, eh?"

"Enough to make me loath to linger at your side in a lighted doorway!"

Lanyard laughed in his own discomfiture.

"M. le Comte," said he, "there's a dash in you of what your American *confrère*, Mysterious Smith, would call sporting blood that commands my unstinted admiration. I thank you for your offered courtesy, and beg leave to accept."

De Morbihan replied with a grunt of none too civil intonation, instructed the chauffeur "To Troyon's," and followed Lanyard into the car.

"Courtesy!" he repeated, settling himself with a shake. "That makes nothing. If I regarded my own inclinations, I'd let you go to the devil as quick as Popinot's assassins could send you there!"

"This is delightful!" Lanyard protested. "First you must see me home to save my life and then you tell me your inclinations consign me to a premature grave. Is there any explanation, possibly?"

"On your person," replied the count briefly.

"Eh?"

"You carry your reason with you, my friend—in the shape of the Omber loot."

"Assuming that you are right—"

"You never went to the Rue du Bac, *monsieur,* without those jewels, and I have had you under observation ever since."

"What conceivable interest," Lanyard pursued evenly, "do you fancy you've got in the said loot?"

"Enough, at least, to render me unwilling to kiss it adieu by leaving you to the mercies of Popinot. You don't imagine I'd ever hear of it again when his Apaches had finished with you?"

"Ah! So, after all, your self-styled organization isn't founded on that reciprocal trust so essential to the success of such—enterprises!"

"Make what you will of your inferences, my friend," the count returned, unruffled; "but don't forget my advice: pull wide of Popinot!"

"A vindictive soul, eh?"

"One may say that."

"And you can't hold him?"

"That one? No fear! You were anything but wise to bait him as you did."

"Perhaps. It's purely a matter of taste in associates."

"If I were the fool you think me," rejoined the count, "I'd resent that innuendo. As it happens, I'm not. At least, I can wait before calling you to account."

"And, meantime, profit by your patience?"

"Naturally. Haven't I said as much?"

"Still I'm perplexed. I can't imagine how you reckon to declare yourself in on the Omber loot."

"That will transpire. If you were wise you'd hand the stuff over to me here and now and accept what I choose to give you in return. But inasmuch as you're the least wise of men, you will have your lesson."

"Meaning—"

"The night brings counsel—you'll have time to think things over. By to-morrow you'll be coming to find me and give me those jewels, without reservation, in exchange for what influence I have in certain quarters."

"With your famous friend, the chief of the *sûreté,* eh?"

"Possibly. I am known also at La Tour Pointure."

"I confess I don't follow you, unless you mean to lay an information against me."

"Never that."

"It's a riddle, then?"

"For the moment only. But I will say this: it will be futile, your attempting to escape Paris; Popinot has already picketed every outlet. Your one hope resides in me; and I shall be at home to you until midnight to-morrow—to-day, rather."

Impressed in spite of himself, Lanyard stared. But the count maintained an imperturbable manner, looking straight ahead. Such calm assurance could hardly be sheer bluff.

"I must think this over," Lanyard muttered.

"Pray don't let me hinder you," the count begged with mild irony. "I have *my* futile thoughts as well."

Lanyard laughed quietly and subsided into a reverie which, undisturbed by De Morbihan, endured throughout the brief remainder of their drive; for, thanks to the smallness of the hour, the streets were practically deserted and offered no hindrance to speed, while the chauffeur was doubtless eager for his bed.

As they drew near Troyon's, however, Lanyard sat up and jealously reconnoitered both sides of the way.

"Surely you don't expect to be kept out?" the count asked dryly. "But that just shows how little you appreciate our good Popinot. He'll never offer any objection to your locking yourself up where he knows he can find you—but only to your leaving without permission!"

"Something in that, perhaps. Still, I always give myself the benefit of every doubt."

There was, indeed, no sign of ambush that he could detect in any quarter—no indication that Popinot's Apaches were skulking about. None the less Lanyard produced his automatic and freed the safety-catch before opening the door.

"A thousand thanks, my dear count!"

"For what? Doing myself a service? You make me ashamed!"

"I know," agreed Lanyard, depreciatory; "but that's the way I am—a little devil—you really can't trust me! Adieu, M. le Comte."

"*Au revoir, monsieur!*"

Lanyard watched the car round the corner before turning to the entrance of Troyon's, simultaneously keeping his weather-eye bright. But when the motor was gone the street seemed quite deserted and as soundless as though it had been the thoroughfare of some remote village rather than an artery of the pulsing old heart of Paris.

Yet he wasn't satisfied. He was as little susceptible to psychic admonition as any sane and normal human organism, but he was just then strongly oppressed by intuitive perception that there was something radically amiss in his neighborhood. Whether or not due to the effect of the count's open intimations and veiled hints working upon a nature sensitized by excitement and fatigue, he felt as though he had stepped from the cab into an atmosphere impregnated with nameless menace. And he even shivered a bit, perhaps because of the chill in that air of early morning, possibly because a shadow of premonition had fallen athwart his soul.

Whatever its cause, he could find no excuse for the sensation, and shaking himself impatiently, pressed the button that rang a bell by the ear of the *concierge*, heard the latch click, thrust the door wide, and reentered Troyon's.

Here reigned a silence even more marked than that of the street, a silence as heavy and profound as the grave's, so that sheer instinct prompted Lanyard to tread lightly as he made his way down the passage and across the courtyard toward the stairway; and in that hush the creak of a greaseless hinge, when the *concierge* opened the door of his quarters to assure himself of the identity of this belated guest, seemed little less than downright profanity.

Lanyard paused and delved into his pockets, nodding genially to the blowzy, sleepy old face beneath the guardian's nightcap.

"Sorry to disturb you, *monsieur*," he said politely, further impoverishing himself in the sum of five francs in witness to the sincerity of his regrets.

"I thank *monsieur;* but what need to consider me? It's my duty. And what is one interruption, more or less? All night they come and go."

"Good night, *monsieur*." Lanyard cut short the old man's garrulity, and went on up the stairs, now a little wearily, of a sudden newly conscious of his enervating fatigue.

He thought longingly of bed, yawned involuntarily, and, reaching his door, fumbled the key in a most unprofessional way; there were weights upon his eyelids, a heaviness in his brain.

But the key met with no resistance from the wards, and in a trice, appreciating this fact, Lanyard was wide awake again.

No question but that he had locked the room securely on leaving after his adventure with the charming somnambulist.

Had she, then, contracted the habit?

Or was this only proof of what he had anticipated in the beginning—a bit of sleuthing on the part of Roddy?

He entertained little doubt as to the correctness of this latter surmise as he threw the door open and stepped into the room, his first action being to grasp the electric switch. But no light answered.

"Hello!" he exclaimed softly, remembering that the light could readily have been turned off at the bulbs. "What's the good of that?"

In the same breath he started violently and swung about.

The door had closed behind him, swiftly but gently, eclipsing the faint light from the hall, leaving stark darkness.

His first impression was that the intruder—Roddy, or whoever it might be—had darted past him and out, pulling the door to in the act.

Before he could consciously revise this misconception he was fighting for his life.

So unexpected, so swift and sudden fell the assault that he was caught completely off guard — between the shutting of the door and an onslaught whose violence sent him reeling to the wall, the flight of time could have been measured by the flickering of an eyelash.

Two powerful arms were round his body, pinioning his hands to his sides, his feet were tripped from under him, and he was thrown with a force that fairly jarred his teeth.

For a breath he lay dazed, struggling feebly; not long, but long enough to enable his antagonist to shift his hold and climb on top of his body, where he squatted, bearing down heavily with a knee on either of Lanyard's forearms, two hands encircling his neck, murderous thumbs digging into his windpipe.

He revived momentarily, pulled himself together, and heaved mightily in a futile effort to unseat the other.

The sole result of this was tightening pressure on his throat.

The pain grew agonizing; Lanyard's breath was almost completely shut off; he gasped vainly; his eyeballs started; a myriad lights danced blindingly before them; in his ears there rang a roaring like the beat of heavy surf upon a rock-bound coast.

Then of a sudden he ceased to struggle and lay slack and passive in the other's hands.

Only an instant longer was the clutch on his throat maintained. Both hands left it quickly, one shifting to his head to turn and press it roughly, cheek to the floor. Simultaneously he was aware of the other hand fumbling about his neck, and then of a touch of metal and the sting of a needle driven into the flesh beneath his ear.

That galvanized him; he came to life again in a twinkling, animate with threefold strength and cunning. The man on his chest was thrown off as by a young earthquake, and Lanyard's right arm was no sooner free than it shot out with blind but deadly accuracy to the point of his assailant's jaw. A click of teeth was followed by a sickish grunt as the man lurched over.

And then Lanyard was scrambling to his feet, a bit giddy perhaps, but still sufficiently master of his wits to whip his pistol out before making one further move.

CHAPTER X

TURN ABOUT

LANYARD now thought of his pocket flash-lamp, and immediately its wide circle of light enveloped his antagonist.

The fellow was resting on a shoulder, legs uncouthly asprawl, quite without movement of any perceptible sort; his face more than half-turned to the floor, and masked into the bargain.

Incredulously Lanyard stirred the body with a foot, holding his weapon poised as though half expecting the form to quicken with instant and violent action; but it responded in no way.

With a nod of satisfaction he shifted the light until it marked the nearest electric bulb, which proved, in line with his inference, to have been extinguished by the socket key rather than by the wall switch, while the heat of the bulb indicated that the current had been shut off only an instant before his entrance.

The light full up, he went back to the thug, knelt, and, lifting the body, turned it upon its back.

Recognition immediately rewarded this maneuver: the masked face upturned to the glare was that of the American who had made a fourth in the concert of the Pack—"Mr. Smith."

Quickly unlatching the mask, Lanyard removed it; but the countenance thus exposed told little more than he knew; he could have sworn he had never seen it before. None the less, something in its saturnine cast persistently troubled his memory with the same provoking and baffling effect that had attended their first encounter.

Already the American was struggling toward consciousness. His lips and eyelids twitched spasmodically, he shuddered, and his flexed muscles began to relax. In this process something fell from between the fingers of his right hand—something small and silver-bright that caught Lanyard's eye.

Picking it up, he examined with interest a small hypodermic syringe, loaded to the full capacity, plunger drawn back — all ready for instant use.

It was the needle of this instrument that had pricked the skin of Lanyard's neck; beyond reasonable doubt it contained a soporific, if not exactly a killing dose of some narcotic drug—cocain, at a venture.

So it appeared that this agent of the Pack had been commissioned to put the Lone Wolf to sleep for an hour or two or more—*perhaps* not permanently—that he might be out of the way long enough for their purposes.

Lanyard smiled grimly, fingering the hypodermic and eying the prostrate man.

"Turn about," he reflected, "is said to be fair play. Well, why not?"

With this he bent forward, dug the needle into the wrist of the American, and shot the plunger home, all in a single movement so swift and deft that the drug was delivered before the pain could startle the victim from his coma.

As for that, he recovered quickly enough; but only to have his clearing senses met and dashed by the muzzle of a pistol stamping a cold ring upon his temple.

"Lie perfectly quiet, my dear Mr. Smith," Lanyard advised; "don't speak above a whisper! Give the dope a chance; it'll only want a moment—or I'm no judge and you're a careless highbinder! I'd like to know, however, if it's all the same to you—"

But the drug was taking swift effect; the look of panic which had drawn the features of the American and flickered from his eyes, with dawning appreciation of his plight, was clouding, fading, blending into one of daze and stupor. The eyelids fluttered and lay still; the lips moved as if with urgent desire to speak, but were dumb; a long, convulsive sigh shook the American's body, and he rested with the immobility of the dead, but for the slow and steady rise and fall of his bosom.

Thoughtfully Lanyard reviewed these phenomena.

"Must kick like a mule, that dope!" he reflected. "Lucky it didn't get me before I guessed what was up! If I'd suspected its strength, however, I'd have been less hasty—I could do with a little information from Mr. Mysterious Stranger here!"

Suddenly conscious of his dry and burning throat, he rose, and going to the washstand, drank deep and thirstily from a water-bottle, then set himself resolutely to repair the disarray of his wits and consider what was best to be done.

In abstraction he wandered to a chair over whose back hung a light dressing-gown of wine-colored silk which, because it would pack in small compass, he was in the habit of carrying with him on his travels. Lanyard had left this thrown across his bed, and he was wondering subconsciously what use the other man had thought to make of it that he should have taken the trouble to remove it to the chair.

But even as he laid hold of it he dropped the garment in sheer surprise to find it damp and heavy in his grasp, sodden with viscid moisture. And when, in a swift flash of intuition, he examined his fingers he discovered thereon a faint discoloration —a reddish stain.

Had the dye run? And why had the American come to dabble the thing in water?

Then the shape of an object on the floor near his feet arrested Lanyard's questing vision. He stared, incredulous, moved forward, bent over, and picked it up, clipping it gingerly between his fingertips.

It was one of his razors—a heavy, hollow-ground blade — and it was foul with blood.

With a low cry, suddenly smitten with understanding, Lanyard wheeled and stared fearfully at the door communicating with Roddy's room.

It stood ajar, an inch or so, its splintered lock accounted for by a small but extremely efficient steel jimmy which lay near the threshold.

Beyond the door—darkness—silence.

Mustering all his courage, the adventurer strode determinedly into the adjoining room.

The first flash of his hand-lamp discovered to him sickening justification for his apprehensions.

After a moment he returned, shut the door, and set his back against it, as if to bar out that reeking shambles.

He was very pale, his face drawn with horror, and he was shaken with nausea.

Now he knew why his dressing-gown had been requisitioned — to protect a butcher's clothing.

The plot was damnably patent—Roddy, somehow a menace to the Pack, required elimination, not only had his murder been decreed, but that the blame for it should be laid at Lanyard's door. Hence the attempt to drug him that he might not escape before the police could be sent to find him there.

Lanyard could no longer doubt that De Morbihan had been left behind at the Circle of Friends of Harmony solely to detain him, afford Smith time to finish his hideous job, and set the trap for the second victim.

And the plot had succeeded despite its partial failure, despite the swift reverse chance and Lanyard's cunning had meted out to the Pack's agent. It was *his* dressing-gown that was saturated with Roddy's blood, just as those were his gloves, pilfered from his luggage, which had measurably protected the killer's hands, and which Lanyard had found in the next room, stripped hastily off and thrown to the floor, twin crumpled wads of blood-stained chamois-skin.

He had now little choice; he must either flee Paris and rely on his wits to save him, or else seek De Morbihan and trust to his protection, to his influence in high quarters.

But to give himself into the hands, to become an associate of one who could be party to so cowardly a crime as this—Lanyard told himself he would sooner pay the guillotine the penalty.

Consulting his watch, he found the hour to be no later than half past four, so swiftly — truly treading upon one another's heels — events had moved since the adventure of the somnambulist.

This left at his disposition a fair two hours more of darkness—November nights are long and black in Paris; it would hardly be even moderately light before seven o'clock. But that was a respite none too long for Lanyard's necessity — he must think swiftly in contemplation of instant action were he to extricate himself without the Pack's knowledge and consent.

Granted, then, that he must fly this stricken field of Paris. But how? De Morbihan had promised that Popinot's creatures would guard every outlet; and Lanyard didn't doubt him. An attempt to escape the city by any normal channel would be to invite one of two things: denunciation to the police on the charge of murder or one of those fatally expeditious forms of assassination of which the Apaches are past masters.

He must and would find another way; but his decision was frightfully hampered by lack of ready money, the few odd francs in his pocket were no store for the war-chest demanded by this emergency.

True, he had the Omber jewels; but they were not negotiable—not, at least, in Paris.

And the Huysman plans?

He pondered briefly the possibilities of the Huysman plans.

In his fretting, pacing softly to and fro, at each turn he passed his dressing-table; and chancing once to observe himself in the mirror, he stopped short, thunderstruck by something he thought to detect in that counterfeit presentment of his countenance, heavy with fatigue as it was, and haggard with contemplation of this appalling *contretemps*.

And instantly he was back beside the American, studying narrowly the contours of that livid mask. Here, then, was that resemblance which had baffled him; and now that he saw it he could not deny that it was unflatteringly close — feature for feature the face of the murderer reproduced his face; coarsened, perhaps, but recognizably a replica of that Michael Lanyard who confronted him every morning in his shaving-glass, almost the only difference residing in the scrubby black mustache that shadowed the American's upper lip.

After all, nothing wonderful in this; Lanyard's type was not uncommon; he would never have thought himself a distinguished figure.

Before rising he turned out the pockets of this casual double. But this profited him little—quite evidently the assassin had dressed for action with forethought to evade recognition in event of accident. Lanyard collected only a cheap American watch in a "rolled-gold" case, of a sort manufactured by wholesale, a common key that might fit any hotel door, a broken paper of Régie cigarettes, an automatic pistol, a few francs in silver — nothing whatever that would serve as a mark of identification; for, though the gray lounge suit was tailor-made, the tailor's labels had been ripped out of its pockets, while the man's linen and underwear alike lacked even a laundry's hieroglyphic.

With this harvest of nothing for his pains Lanyard turned again to the washstand and his shaving-kit, mixed a stiff lather, stropped another razor to the finest edge he could manage, fetched a pair of keen scissors from his dressing-case, and went back to the murderer.

He worked rapidly, at a high pitch of excitement — as much through sheer desperation as through any appeal inherent in his scheme, either to his common sense or to his romantic bent.

In two minutes he had stripped the mustache clean away from that stupid, flaccid mask.

Unquestionably the resemblance was now most striking; the American would readily pass for Michael Lanyard.

This much accomplished, he pursued his preparations in feverish haste. In spite of this, he overlooked no detail. In less than twenty minutes he had exchanged clothing with the American down to shirts, collars, and neckties; had packed in his own pockets the several articles taken from the other, together with the jointed jimmy and a few of his personal effects, and was ready to bid adieu to himself, to that Michael Lanyard whom Paris knew.

The insentient masquerader on the floor had called himself "Goodenough Smith"; he must serve now as "Goodenough Lanyard," at least for the Lone Wolf's purposes; the police, at all events, would accept him as such. And if the memory of Michael Lanyard must needs wear the stigma of brutal murder, he need not repine in his oblivion, since through this perfunctory decease the Lone Wolf would gain freedom even greater than before.

The Pack had contrived only to eliminate Michael Lanyard, the amateur of fine paintings; remained the Lone Wolf with not one faculty impaired, but rather with a deadlier purpose to shape his occult courses.

Under the influence of his methodical preparations his emotions had cooled appreciably, taking a cast of cold, malignant vengefulness.

He, who never in all his criminal record had so much as pulled trigger in self-defense, was ready now to shoot to kill with the most cold-blooded intent — given one of three targets; while for Popinot's creatures, if they worried him, he meant to exterminate them with as little compunction as though they were the rats in fact that they were in spirit.

Extinguishing the lights, he stepped quickly to a window and from one edge of its shade looked down into the street.

He was in time to see a stunted human silhouette detach itself from the shadow of a doorway on the opposite walk, move to the curb, and wave an arm—evidently signaling another sentinel on a farther corner and out of Lanyard's range of vision.

Herein was additional proof, if any lacked, that De Morbihan had not exaggerated the disposition of Popinot. This animal in the street, momentarily revealed by the corner light as he darted across to take position by the door, this animal with sickly face and pointed chin, with dirty muffler round its chicken-neck, shoddy coat clothing its sloping shoulders, baggy corduroy trousers flapping round its bony shanks—this was Popinot's, and but one of a thousand differing in no essential save degree of viciousness.

It wasn't possible to guess how thoroughly Popinot had picketed the house, in cooperation with Roddy's murderer, by way of provision against mischance; but the adventurer was satisfied that, in his proper guise as himself, he needed only to open that postern door at the street end of the passage to feel a knife slip in between his ribs—most probably in his back, beneath the shoulder-blade.

He nodded grimly, moved back from the window, and used the flash-lamp to light him to the door.

CHAPTER XI

FLIGHT

Now when Lanyard had locked the door the gruesome peace of those two bedchambers was insured, barring the unforeseen, for as long as the drug held sway over the faculties of the American, and Lanyard felt justified in reckoning that the other's unconsciousness would be tolerably protracted, while not before noon at the earliest would any Parisian landlord who knew his business dare permit the rest of an Anglo-Saxon guest to be disturbed—in the absence, at least, of definite instructions to the contrary.

For a full minute after withdrawing the key the adventurer stood at alert attention; but the heavy silence of that sinister old rookery sang in his ears untroubled by any untoward sound.

That wistful shadow of his memories, that cowering Marcel of yesterday, in acute terror of the heavy hand of Mme. Troyon, had never stolen down that corridor more quietly; yet Lanyard had taken not five paces from his door when that other, at the far end of the corridor, opened, and Lucia Bannon stepped out.

He halted and shut his teeth upon an involuntary oath — truly it seemed as though this run of the devil's own luck would never end!

Astonishment measurably modified his exasperation. What had roused the girl out of bed and dressed her for the street at that unholy hour? And why her terror at sight of him?

For that the encounter was no more welcome to her than to him was as patent as the fact that she was prepared to leave the hotel forthwith. A businesslike Burberry rain-proof enveloped her from throat to the hem of a short walking-skirt of rough tweed, beneath which boots both stout and brown were visible.

At sight of him she paused with a nervous start and instinctively stepped back, groping blindly for the knob of her bedchamber door, while the eyes that held to his with an effect of frightened fascination seemed momentarily to grow larger and darker in her face of abnormal pallor.

But these were illegible evidences, and Lanyard ignored them, intent only on securing her attention and silence before she could speak and so, perhaps, betray him and ruin incontinently that grim alibi he had prepared with such elaborate pains. He moved toward her swiftly, with long, silent strides, a lifted hand enjoining rather than begging her silence and attention. As he drew nearer he was aware that a curious change was coloring the complexion of her temper. She passed quickly from dread to something oddly like relief, from repulsion to something strangely like welcome, and dropping the hand that had sought the door-knob, she, in turn, moved quietly to meet him.

He was grateful for this consideration, for this tacit indulgence of the wish he had as yet to voice, and drew a little hope and comfort from it in an emergency which had surprised him without resource other than to throw himself upon her mercy. And as soon as he could make himself heard in the clear yet concentrated whisper that was a trick of his trade, he addressed her in a manner at once peremptory and apologetic:

"If you please, Miss Bannon—not a word, not a whisper!"

She paused and nodded, eyes steadfast to his, questioning but compliant.

Doubtfully, wondering that she didn't show more wonder, he went on in the spirit of one committed to a forlorn hope:

"It's vitally essential that I leave this hotel without it becoming known. If I might count on you to say nothing—"

She gave him pause with a small gesture. "But how?" she breathed in the least of whispers. "The *concierge*—"

"Leave that to me — I know another way. I need only a chance—"

"Then you must take me with you!"

"Eh?" he stammered, dashed.

Her hands moved toward him in a flutter of entreaty: "I, too, must leave unseen—I *must!* Take me with you—and I promise you no one shall ever know—"

He lacked time to weigh the disadvantages inherent in her proposition; though she offered him a heavy handicap, he had no choice but to accept it without protest.

"Come, then," he told her—"and not a sound—"

She signified assent with another nod, and promptly he turned to an adjacent door, opened it gently, whipped out his flash-lamp, and passed through. Without sign of hesitancy she followed, and like two shadows they dogged that dancing spot-light through a linen-closet and service room, down a shallow well threaded by a spiral of iron steps and, by way of a long corridor that linked the kitchen offices, on to a stout door of oak secured only by huge, old-style bolts of iron.

In two minutes from the moment of their encounter they stood outside Troyon's, that door at their back, facing a cramped, malodorous alleyway — a dark and noisome souvenir of that wild medieval Paris whose effacement is an enduring monument to the fame of the good Baron Haussmann.

Now, again, it was raining, a thick drizzle that settled slowly, wanting little of a fog's opacity; and the faint glimmer of the street-lamps of that ill-lighted quarter lent Lanyard and the girl little aid as they picked their way cautiously, and always in complete silence, over the slimy cobbles of the foul backway. For the adventurer had pocketed his lamp, fearing lest it bring down upon them some prowling creature of Popinot's, though he felt passably sure that the alley had been left unguarded — less, perhaps, through ignorance of it than through confidence that he would never dream of its existence did he survive to seek an escape.

For all its might and its omniscience, Lanyard doubted if the Pack had as yet identified Michael Lanyard with that ill-starred Marcel who once had been as intimate with this secret way as any skulking tom of its feline hordes.

But with this one confidence was never akin to foolhardiness; and if, before leaving Troyon's back door, he had paused to take the girl's hand and had drawn it through his arm—it was his left arm that he thus dedicated to gallantry—his right hand remained unhampered and was never far from the grip of his automatic.

Nor was he altogether trustful of his companion. To be sure, the weight of her hand upon his arm, the fugitive contacts of her shoulder, seemed to him, just then, the most vivid and interesting thing in life; the consciousness of her personality at his side was like a shaft of golden light penetrating the darkness of his dilemma. But as minutes passed and their progress was unchallenged, leaving him free to think, his mood grew dark with doubts and quick with mistrust. Reviewing it all, he thought to detect something too damnably adventitious in the way she had nailed him back there in the corridor of Troyon's. It was too coincidental—"a bit thick!"—like that specious yarn she had told of somnambulism to excuse her presence in his room. Come to examine it, that excuse had been much too flimsy to hoodwink any but a man bewitched by beauty in distress.

Who was she, anyway? And what her interest in him? What had she been after in his room—this American girl making a first visit to Paris in company with that venerable ruin of a parent? Who, for that matter, was Bannon? If her story of sleep-walking wasn't true, then Bannon must have been at the bottom of that essay in espionage—Bannon, the intimate of De Morbihan, and an American, even as the murderer of poor Roddy was an American!

Was this singularly casual encounter, then, but a cloak for further surveillance? Had he, in his haste and desperation, simply played into her hands when he burdened himself with the care of her?

But it seemed absurd to think that she —a girl like her, by every word and gesture of gentle birth and inclinations—

Yet—what *had* she been after in his room? Somnambulists are sincere indeed in the indulgence of their failing when they time their expeditions so opportunely —and arm themselves with keys to fit strange doors. Come to think of it, he had been rather wilfully blind to that anomaly in her excuse. Again, why should she have been up and dressed — and so madly bent on leaving Troyon's—at half past four in the morning? Why couldn't she have waited for daylight at least? What errand, reasonable duty, or design could have roused her out into the night and the storm at that weird hour? He wondered!

And momentarily he grew more jealously heedful of her, of every nuance in her bearing. The least trace of added pressure on his arm, the most subtle suggestion that she wasn't altogether indifferent to him or regarded him in any way other than as the chance-found comrade of an hour of trouble would have proved enough to fix his suspicions. For such, he told himself, would be the first thought of one bent on beguiling, to lead him on by some intimation—the more tenuous and elusive the more provoking—that she found him in person not altogether objectionable.

But he failed to find anything of this in her manner.

So what was he to think? That she was alert enough to appreciate how ruinous to her design would be any such advances?

In such perplexity he brought her to the mouth of the alley and there pulled up for reconnaissance before venturing forth into the narrow, dark, and utterly deserted side street that then presented itself.

At this the girl gently disengaged her hand and drew away a pace or two, and when Lanyard had satisfied himself that there were no Apaches in the offing he turned to see her standing there, just within the entrance to the alley, in a pose of blank indecision.

Conscious of his regard, she turned to his inspection a face touched with a fugitive, uncertain smile.

"Where are we?" she asked in a guarded tone.

He named the street, and she shook her head.

"That doesn't mean much to me," she confessed; "I'm so strange in Paris, I know only a few of the principal streets. Where is the Boulevard St. Germain?"

Lanyard indicated the direction: "Two blocks that way."

"Thank you." She advanced a step or two, but paused again. "Do you know, possibly, just where I could find a taxicab?"

"I'm afraid you'll find none in this quarter at this hour," he replied. "A *fiacre,* perhaps—with luck. I doubt if there is one disengaged nearer than Montmartre, where business is apt to be more brisk."

"Oh!" she cried in dismay. "I hadn't thought of that. I thought Paris never went to sleep!"

"Only about three hours earlier than most of the world's capitals. But perhaps I can advise you—"

"If you only would be so kind! Only I don't like to seem a nuisance—"

He smiled deceptively: "Don't worry about that. Where do you wish to go?"

"To the Gare du Nord."

That made him open his eyes. "The Gare du Nord!" he echoed. "But—I beg your pardon—"

"I wish to catch the first train for London," the girl informed him calmly.

"You'll have some time to wait," Lanyard informed her. "The first train leaves about half past eight, and now it's not more than five."

"That can't be helped. I can wait in the station."

He shrugged; that was her lookout—if she were sincere in her assertion that she meant to leave Paris; something which he took the liberty of doubting.

"You can reach it by the Métro," he suggested—"the underground, you know; there's a station handy—St. Germain des Prés. If you like, I'll show you the way."

Her relief seemed so naive he could almost have believed it genuine. And yet—

"I shall be very grateful," she murmured.

He took that for whatever worth it might assay and quietly fell into place beside her, and in a mutual silence—perhaps largely due to her intuitive sense of his bias—they gained the Boulevard St. Germain. But here, even as they emerged from the side street, that happened which again upset Lanyard's plans—a belated *fiacre* hove up out of the mist and ranged alongside, its driver loudly soliciting patronage.

Beneath his breath Lanyard cursed the man liberally; nothing could have been more inopportune; he needed that uncouth conveyance for his own purposes, and if it had only waited until he had piloted the girl to the Métropolitaine station, he might have had it. Now he must either yield the cab to the girl or—share it with her. And why not? He could readily drop out at his destination and bid the driver continue to the Gare du Nord, and the Métro was neither quick nor direct enough for his design—which included getting under cover well before daybreak.

Somewhat sulkily, then, if without betraying his temper, he signaled the *cocher,* opened the door, and handed the girl in with the suggestion:

"If you don't mind dropping me *en route.*"

"I shall be very glad," she said—"anything to repay, even in part, the courtesy you've shown me!"

"Oh, please don't worry about that."

He gave the driver precise directions, climbed in, and settled himself beside the girl. The whip cracked, the horse sighed, the driver swore, the aged *fiacre* groaned, stirred reluctantly, crawled wearily off through the thickening drizzle.

Within its body a common restraint held silence like a wall between the two.

The girl sat with face averted, reading through the window what corner signs they passed: Rue Bonaparte, Rue Jacob, Rue des Saintes Pères, Quai Malquais, Pont de Carrousel, recognizing at least one landmark in the gloomy arches of the Louvre, vaguely wondering at the inept French taste in nomenclature which had christened that vast, lowering, echoing quadrangle, the Place du Carrousel, unliveliest of public squares in her unhappy Parisian experience.

And in his turn Lanyard reviewed those well-remembered ways in vast weariness of spirit—disgusted with himself in consciousness that the girl had somehow divined his distrust.

" The Lone Wolf, eh?" he mused bitterly. " Rather, the Cornered Rat—if people only knew! Better still, the Errant—no—the Arrant Ass!"

They were skirting the Palais Royal when suddenly she turned to him in an impulsive attempt at self-justification.

" What *must* you be thinking of me, Mr. Lanyard!"

He was startled.

" I? Oh, don't consider me, please. It doesn't matter what I think—does it?"

" But you've been so kind, I feel I owe you at least some explanation of what must seem strange to you."

" Oh, as to that," he countered cheerfully, " I've got a pretty definite notion that you're running away from your father."

" Yes. I couldn't stand it any longer—"

She caught herself up, as though tempted but afraid to say more. He waited briefly before offering encouragement.

" I hope I haven't seemed impertinent."

" No, no!"

Than this impatient negative his pause of invitation evoked no other recognition. She had subsided into her reserve, but—he fancied—not altogether willingly.

Was it, then, possible that he had misjudged her?

" You've friends in London, no doubt?" he hazarded.

" No—none."

" But—"

" I shall manage very well. I sha'n't be there more than a day or two—till the next steamer sails."

" I see." There had sounded in her tone a finality which signified desire to drop the subject. None the less he pursued mischievously: " Permit me to wish you *bon voyage*, Miss Bannon—and to express my regret that circumstances have conspired to change your plans."

She was still eying him askance, dubiously, as if weighing the question of his acquaintance with her plans, when the *fiacre* lumbered from the Rue Vivienne into the Place de la Bourse, rounded that frowning pile, and drew up on its north side before the blue lights of the all-night telegraph bureau.

" With permission," Lanyard said, unlatching the door, " I'll stop off here. But I'll direct the *cocher* very carefully to the Gare du Nord. Please don't even tip him—that's my affair. No, not another word of thanks; to have been permitted to be of service—it is a unique pleasure, Miss Bannon. And so, good night!"

With an effect that seemed little less than timid the girl offered her hand.

" Thank you, Mr. Lanyard," she said in an unsteady voice. " I am sorry—"

But she didn't say what it was she regretted, and Lanyard, standing with bared head in the driving mist, touched her fingers coolly, repeated his farewells, gave the driver both money and instructions, and saw the cab lurch away before he turned toward the telegraph bureau.

But the enigma of the girl so deeply intrigued his imagination that it was only with difficulty that he concocted a noncommittal telegram to Roddy's acquaintance in the *préfecture de police*—that imposing personage who had watched with the man from Scotland Yard at the platform gates in the Gare du Nord.

It was couched in English when eventually composed and submitted to the telegraph clerk with a fervent, if inaudible, prayer that he might be ignorant of the tongue.

> Come at once to my room at Troyon's. Enter *via* adjoining room prepared for immediate action on important development. Urgent.
>
> RODDY.

Whether or not this were Greek to the

man behind the wicket, it was accepted with complete indifference — or, rather, with an interest that apparently evaporated upon receipt of the fees. Lanyard couldn't see that the clerk favored him with as much as a curious glance before he turned away to lose himself, to bury his identity finally and forever under the incognito of the Lone Wolf.

He couldn't have rested without taking that one step to compass the arrest of the American assassin; now, with luck and prompt action on the part of the *préfecture,* he felt sure that Roddy would be avenged by M. de Paris. But it was quite as well that there should be no clue whereby the author of that mysterious telegram might be traced.

It was, then, not an ill-pleased Lanyard who slipped off into the night and the rain; but his exasperation was elaborate when the first object that met his gaze was that wretched *fiacre,* back in place before the door, Lucia Bannon leaning from its lowered window, the *cocher* on his box brandishing an importunate whip at the adventurer.

He barely escaped choking on suppressed profanity, and for two sous would have swung on his heel and ignored the girl deliberately. But he didn't dare—close at hand stood a *sergent de ville,* inquisitive eyes bright beneath the dripping vizor of his cap, keenly welcoming this diversion of a cheerless hour.

With at least outward semblance of resignation Lanyard approached the window.

"I have been guilty of some stupidity, perhaps?" he inquired with lip-civility that knew no echo in his heart. "But I am sorry—"

"The stupidity is mine," the girl interrupted in accents tense with agitation. "Mr. Lanyard, I—I—"

Her voice faltered and broke in a short, dry sob, and she drew back with an effect of instinctive distaste for public emotion. Lanyard smothered an impulse to demand roughly: "Well, what now?" and came closer to the window.

"There's something else I can do, Miss Bannon?"

"I don't know. I've just found it out—I came away so hurriedly I never thought to make sure; but I've no money—only a few francs!"

After a little pause he commented: "That does complicate matters, doesn't it?"

"What am I to do? I can't go back—I won't! Anything rather. You may judge how desperate I am when I prefer to throw myself on your generosity—and already I've strained your patience—"

"Not much," he interrupted pleasantly, in a soothing voice. "But—half a moment—we'll have to talk this over."

Directing the *cocher* to drive to the Place Pigalle, he reentered the cab, suspicion more than ever rife in his mind. But as far as he could see — with that confounded *sergent de ville* staring — there was nothing else for it. He couldn't stand there in the rain forever, gossiping with a girl half hysterical or pretending to be.

"You see," she explained when the *fiacre* was again under way, "I thought I had a hundred-franc note in my pocketbook, and so I have—but the pocketbook's back there in my room at Troyon's."

"A hundred francs wouldn't see you far toward New York," he observed thoughtfully.

"Oh, I hope you don't think—"

She drew back into her corner with a little shudder of humiliation.

As if he hadn't, Lanyard turned to the window, leaned out, and redirected the driver sharply: "Impasse Stanislas!"

Immediately the vehicle swerved, rounded a corner, and made back toward the Seine with a celerity which suggested that the stables lay on the Rive Gauche.

"Where?" the girl demanded as Lanyard sat back. "Where are you taking me?"

"I'm sorry," Lanyard said with every appearance of sudden contrition; "I acted impulsively—on the assumption of your complete confidence. Which, of course, was unpardonable. But, believe me, you have only to say no, and it shall be as you wish."

"But," she persisted impatiently—"you haven't answered me: what is this Impasse Stanislas?"

"The address of an artist I know—Solon, the painter. We're going to take possession of his studio-residence in his absence. Don't worry; he won't mind. He is under heavy obligation to me—I've sold several canvases for him, and when he's away, as now, in the States, he leaves me the keys. It's a sober-minded, steady-paced neighborhood, where we can rest without misgivings and take our time to think things out."

"But—" the girl began in an odd tone.

"Permit me," he interposed hastily, "to urge the facts of the case upon your consideration."

"Well?" she said in the same tone, as he paused.

"To begin with—I don't doubt you've good reason for running away from your father."

"A very real, a very grave reason," she affirmed quietly.

"And you'd rather not go back—"

"That is out of the question!" with restrained passion that almost won his credulity.

"But you've no friends in Paris?"

"Not one!"

"And no money. So it seems, if you're to elude your father, you must find some place to hide *pro tem.* As for myself, I've not slept in forty-eight hours and must rest before I can do more, before I'll be able to think clearly and plan ahead. And we won't accomplish much riding round forever in this miserable ark. So I offer you the only solution I'm capable of advancing under the circumstances."

"You are quite right," the girl agreed after a moment. "Please don't think me unappreciative. Indeed, it makes me very unhappy to think I know no way to make amends for your trouble."

"There may be a way," Lanyard informed her quietly; "but we'll not discuss that until we've rested up a bit."

"I shall be only too glad—" she began, but broke off and, in a silence that seemed almost apprehensive, eyed him speculatively throughout the remainder of the journey.

It wasn't a long one, and in the course of the next ten minutes they drew up at the end of a shallow pocket of a street a scant half-block in depth. Alighting, Lanyard helped the girl out, paid and dismissed the *cocher,* and turned to an iron gate in a high stone wall crowned with spikes.

The grillework of that gate afforded glimpses of a small, dark garden and a little house of two stories. Blank walls of beetling tenements shouldered both house and garden on either side.

Unlocking the gate with a ready key, Lanyard refastened it very carefully, repeated the business at the front door of the house, and when they were securely locked and bolted within a dark reception-hall, turned on the electric light.

But he granted the girl little more than time for a fugitive survey of this ante-room to an establishment of unique artistic character.

"Solon's living-quarters are down-stairs here," he explained hurriedly. "He's unmarried, and lives quite alone—his studio devil and the woman who cares for things come in by the day only—and so he avoids that pest of Parisian life, the *concierge.* With your permission, I'll assign you to the studio—up here."

And leading the way up a narrow flight of steps, he had made a light in the huge room by the time the girl joined him.

"I believe you'll be comfortable," he said. "That divan yonder is as easy a couch as one could wish—and there's this door you can lock at the head of the staircase; while I, of course, will be on guard below. And now, Miss Bannon—unless there's something else I can do—"

The girl answered with a wan smile and a little broken sigh. Almost involuntarily, in the heaviness of her fatigue, she had surrendered to the hospitable arms of a huge lounge chair.

Her weary glance ranged the luxuriously appointed studio and returned to Lanyard's face, and while he waited he fancied he caught something moving and wistful in those eyes so deeply shadowed with distress, perplexity, and fatigue.

"I'm very tired indeed," she confessed —"more than I knew. But I'm sure I shall be comfortable. And I count myself very fortunate, Mr. Lanyard. You've been more kind than I deserve. Without you, I don't like to think what might have become of me."

"Please don't!" he pleaded. And suddenly discountenanced by consciousness of his duplicity, he turned to the stairs. "Good night, Miss Bannon," he mumbled, and was half-way down before he heard his valediction faintly echoed.

As he gained the lower floor the door was closed at the top of the stairs and its bolt shot home with a soft thud. When he turned to lock the lower one he stayed his hand in transient indecision.

"Damn it!" he growled uneasily—"there can't be any harm in that girl! Impossible for eyes like hers to lie! And yet— And yet— Oh, what's the matter with me? Am I losing my grip? Why hesitate over ordinary precautions against treachery on the part of a woman who's nothing to me and of whom I know nothing that isn't conspicuously questionable? All because of a pretty face and an appealing manner!"

So he locked that door, if very gently, and having pocketed the key and made a round of doors and windows to examine their fastenings, he stumbled heavily into the bedroom of his friend the artist.

Darkness overwhelmed him then—he was stricken down by sleep as an ox falls under the pole.

CHAPTER XII

AWAKENING

It was late afternoon when Lanyard wakened from sleep so deep and dreamless that nothing could have induced it less potent than sheer systemic exhaustion, at once nervous, muscular, and mental.

A profound and stifling lethargy benumbed his senses. There was stupor in his brain and all his limbs ached dully. He opened dazed eyes upon blank darkness. In his ears sounded a vast silence.

And in that strange moment of awakening he was conscious of no individuality—it was, for the time, as if he had passed in slumber from one existence to another, sloughing in the transition all his threefold existence as Marcel Troyon, Michael Lanyard, and the Lone Wolf. Had any one of these names been uttered in his hearing just then it would have meant nothing to him—or little more than nothing—he was merely *himself*, a shell of sensations enclosing dull embers of vitality.

For several minutes he lay without moving, curiously intrigued by this riddle of identity — it was but slowly that his mind, like a blind hand groping through the arras of a darkened chamber, picked up the filaments of memory.

But one by one the connections were renewed, the circuits closed.

Singularly enough, in his understanding, his first thought was of the girl—still, presumably, asleep up-stairs in the studio, unconsciously his prisoner and hostage.

For he was no more as he had been. Wherein the difference lay he couldn't say, but that a difference existed he was persuaded—that he had changed, that some strange reaction in the chemistry of his nature had taken place while he slept. It was as if sleep had not only repaired the ravages of fatigue upon the tissues of his brain and body, but had mended the tissues of his soul as well.

His thoughts were fluent in fresh channels, his interests no longer the interests of the Michael Lanyard he had known, no longer self-centered, the interests of the absolute ego. He was concerned less for himself, even now, when he should be most concerned about himself, than for another, for the girl Lucia Bannon, who was nothing to him, whom he had yet to know for twenty-four hours, but none the less a woman of whom he could not cease to think if he would.

It was her situation that perturbed him, her predicament from which he sought an outlet—never his own.

Yet his own was desperate enough.

Baffled and uneasy, he at length bethought him of his watch. But its testimony seemed incredible—surely the hour could not be five in the afternoon! Surely he could not have slept so close upon a full round of the clock!

And if it were so, what of the girl? Had she, too, so sorely needed sleep that the brief November day had dawned and waned without her knowledge?

That question was one to agitate him; he was up in an instant and groping his way through the gloom-enshrouding bedchamber and dining-room to the staircase door in the reception-hall. He found this fast enough, for its key was safe in his pocket, and unlocking it quietly, he shot the beam of his lamp up that dark wall to the door at the top, which was tight shut.

For several moments he listened, but there was never a sound to indicate that he wasn't a lonely tenant of the little dwelling, then irresolutely he lifted a foot to the first step—and withdrew it. If she were still asleep, why disturb her? He had much to do in the way of thinking things out, and that was a process more easily performed in solitude.

Leaving the door ajar, he turned to one of the front windows, parted its draperies, and peered out, over the little garden and through the iron ribs of the gate, to the street, where a single gas-lamp, glimmering within a dull, golden halo of mist, made visible the scant length of the Impasse Stanislas, empty, rain-swept, desolate.

Rain continued to fall with no hint of stopping.

Something in the dreary emptiness of that brief vista deepened the shadow in his mood and knitted a care-worn frown into his brows.

Abstractedly he sought the kitchen and, making a light, washed up at the tap, then foraged for breakfast. Persistence turned up a spirit-stove, a packet of tea, a tin or two of biscuit, as many more of potted meats—left-overs from the artist's stock, dismally scant and uninviting in array. With these he made the discovery that he was half famished, and found no reason to believe that the girl would be in any better case. An expedition to the nearest butcher was advisable; but after he had found an old rain-coat of Solon's Lanyard decided against leaving the girl alone. Pending her appearance, he filled the spirit-stove, put the kettle on to boil, and lighting a cigarette, sat himself down beside the table to watch the pot and cogitate over his several problems.

In a fashion uncommonly clear-headed, even for him, he assembled all the facts bearing upon their position, his and Lucia Bannon's, and dispassionately pondered them.

But insensibly his thoughts reverted to the exotic phase of his awakening, drifting into such introspection as he seldom indulged, and led him by strange ways to a revelation altogether unpresaged and a resolve still more revolutionary.

A look of wonder flickered in his brooding eyes, and clipped between two fingers, his cigarette grew a long ash, let it fall, and burned down to a stump so short that the coal almost scorched his flesh. He dropped it and crushed out the fire with his heel quite unwittingly.

Slowly but irresistibly his world was turning over beneath his feet.

The sound of a footfall recalled him as from an immeasurable remove; he looked up to see the girl at pause upon the threshold. He rose slowly, with effort recollecting himself and marshaling his wits against the emergency foreshadowed by her attitude.

Tense with indignation, quick with disdain, she demanded without any preface whatever: "Why did you lock me in?"

He stammered unhappily: "I beg your pardon—"

"Why did you lock me in?"

"I'm sorry—"

But she interrupted him to stamp her foot emphatically, and he caught her up on the echo of that.

"If you must know, because I wasn't trusting you."

Her eyes darkened ominously. "Yet you insisted that I must trust *you!*"

"The circumstances aren't parallel; you're not a notorious malefactor wanted by the police of every capital in Europe, hounded by rivals to boot—fighting for life, liberty, and"—he laughed shortly—"the pursuit of happiness!"

She caught her breath sharply—whether with dismay or mere surprise at his frankness he couldn't tell.

"Are you?" she demanded quickly.

"Am I what?"

"What you've just said—"

"A crook—and all that? Miss Bannon, you *know* it!"

"The Lone Wolf?"

"You've known it all along. De Morbihan told you—or else your father. Or, it may be, you were shrewd enough to guess it from De Morbihan's gasconnading at the table. At all events, it's plain enough to me that nothing but desire to secure proof of my identity with the Lone Wolf took you to my room last night—whether for your personal satisfaction or at the instigation of Bannon — and that nothing less than your own disgust with what was going on actuated you to run away from such intolerable associations. Though, at that, I don't believe you even guessed how unspeakably vicious they were!"

He paused and waited, anticipating furious denial or attempt at refutation; such would, indeed, have been the logical development of the temper in which she had descended to confront him.

Rather than this, she seemed calmed and sobered by his charge; far from resenting it, she appeared disposed to concede its fairness; anger deserted her expression, leaving it intent and grave. She came quietly into the room and faced him squarely across the table.

"You thought that ill of me—that I was capable of spying on you—yet were generous enough to believe I despised myself for doing it?"

"Not at first. At first, after we had met back there in the corridor, I was convinced you were bent on further spying.

Not till within this hour, since waking up, did I begin to understand how impossible it would be for you to lend yourself to such villainy as was at work last night."

"But if you thought that of me then, why did you—"

"It occurred to me that it would be just as well to prevent your reporting back to headquarters."

"But you say you've changed your mind about me?"

He nodded. "Quite."

"But why?" she demanded in a voice of amazement. "Why?"

"I can't tell you," he said slowly—"I don't know why. I can only presume it must be because—I can't help believing in you."

Her glance wavered, her color deepened. "I don't understand—" she murmured.

"Nor I," he confessed in a tone as low.

A sudden grumble from the teakettle on the table between them provided welcome distraction. Lanyard lifted it off and slowly poured the boiling water on a measure of tea in an earthenware pot.

"A cup of this and something to eat'll do us no harm," he ventured, smiling un-

"SORRY I HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO OFFER YOU. I'D HAVE RUN—

easily—" especially if we're to pursue our psychological inquiry into the whereforeness of the human tendency to change one's mind!"

CHAPTER XIII

CONFESSIONAL

When the girl made no response, but remained with troubled gaze focused on some remote abstraction, " You will have tea, won't you?" Lanyard urged.

She recalled her thoughts, nodded with the faintest of smiles—" Yes, thank you "—and dropped into a chair.

He began at once to make talk in an effort to dissipate the constraint that stood between them like an unseen alien presence: " You must be very hungry."

" I am," she assented.

" Sorry I've nothing better to offer you. I'd have run out for something more substantial, only—"

" Only—" she prompted, coolly helping herself to biscuit and potted ham.

"I didn't think it wise to leave you alone."

—OUT, ONLY I DIDN'T THINK IT WISE TO LEAVE YOU HERE ALONE"

"Was that before or after you'd made up your mind about me—the latest phase, I mean?" she persisted with a trace of malice.

"Before," he returned calmly—"likewise, afterward. Either way you care to take it, it wouldn't have been wise to leave you here. Suppose you had waked up to find me gone, yourself alone in this strange house—"

"I've been awake several hours," she interposed—"found myself locked in, and heard no sound to indicate that you were still here."

"I'm sorry; I was overtired and slept like a log. But assuming the case: you would have gone out alone, penniless—"

"Through a locked door, Mr. Lanyard?"

"I shouldn't have left it locked," he explained patiently. "You would have found yourself friendless and without resources in a city to which you are a stranger."

She nodded. "True. But what of that?"

"In desperation you might have been forced to return—"

"And report the outcome of my investigation!"

"Pressure might have been brought to bear upon you to induce admissions damaging to me," Lanyard submitted pleasantly. "Whether or no, you'd have been obliged to renew associations you're well rid of."

"You feel sure of that?"

"Quite sure."

"How can you be?" she challenged. "You've yet to know me twenty-four hours."

"But perhaps I know the associations better. In point of fact, I do. Even though you may have stooped to play the spy last night, Miss Bannon—you couldn't keep it up. You ran away to escape further contamination from that pack of jackals."

"Not—you feel sure—merely to keep you under observation?"

"I do feel sure of that. I have your word for it."

The girl deliberately finished her tea and sat back, regarding him steadily beneath level brows. Then she said with an odd laugh: "You have your own way of putting one on honor!"

"I don't need to—with you."

She analyzed this with gathering perplexity. "What do you mean by that?"

"I mean I don't need to put you on your honor—because I'm sure of you. But even if I were not, still I'd refrain from exacting any pledge, or attempting to." He paused and shrugged before continuing. "If I thought you were still to be distrusted, Miss Bannon, I'd say: 'There's a free door; go when you like, back to the Pack, turn in your report, and let them act as they see fit.' Do you think I care for them? Do you imagine for one instant that I fear any one — or all — of that gang?"

"That rings suspiciously of egoism!"

"Let it," he retorted. "It's pride of caste, if you must know. I hold myself a grade better than such cattle; I've intelligence, at least. I can take care of myself!"

If he might read her countenance, it expressed more than anything else distress and disappointment.

"Why do you boast like this—to me?"

"Less through self-satisfaction than through contempt for a pack of murderous mongrels—impatience that I have to consider such creatures as Popinot, Wertheimer, De Morbihan, and—all that crew!"

"And Bannon," she corrected calmly—"you meant to say!"

"Well—" he stammered, discountenanced.

"It doesn't matter," she assured him. "I quite understand, and strange as it may sound, I've very little feeling in the matter." And then she acknowledged his stupefied stare with a weary little smile. "I know what I know," she affirmed with obscure significance.

"I'd give a good deal to know how much you know," he muttered in his confusion.

"But what do *you* know?" she caught him up—"against Mr. Bannon—against my father, that is—that makes you so ready to suspect both him and me?"

"Nothing," he confessed—"I *know* nothing; but I suspect everything and everybody. And the more I think of it, the more closely I examine that brutal business of last night, the more I seem to sense his will behind it all—as one might glimpse a face in darkness through a lighted lattice. Oh, laugh if you like! It sounds high-flown, I know. But that's the effect I get. What took you to my room, if not his orders? How comes he to run with De Morbihan, if he's not blood-kin to that breed? Why are you running away from him, if not because you've found out his part in that conspiracy?"

His pause and questioning look evoked no answer; the girl sat moveless and intent, meeting his gaze with a countenance inscrutable. And something in her impassive attitude worked a little exasperation into his temper.

"Why," he declared hotly—"if I dare trust to intuition—forgive me if I pain you—"

She interrupted with impatience: "I've already begged you not to consider my feelings, Mr. Lanyard! If you dared trust to your intuition—then what?"

"Why, then I could believe that Mr. Bannon, your father — I could believe it was his order that killed poor Roddy!"

There could be no doubting her horrified and half-incredulous surprise.

"Roddy?" she iterated in a whisper almost inaudible, with face fast blanching. "Roddy—"

"Inspector Roddy, of Scotland Yard," he told her mercilessly, "was murdered in his sleep last night at Troyon's. The murderer broke into his room by way of mine —the two adjoin. He used my razor, wore my dressing-gown to protect his clothing, did everything he could think of to cast suspicion on me, and when I came in assaulted me, meaning to drug and leave me insensible, to be found by the police. Fortunately—I was beforehand with him. I left him in my place—drugged, insensible —when I stole away and met you there in the corridor. You didn't know?"

"How can you ask?" the girl moaned. Bending forward, an elbow on the table, she gripped her hands together until their knuckles shone white through the skin—but not as white as the white face from which her eyes sought his with a look of dumb horror, dazed, pitiful, imploring.

"You're not deceiving me? But no—why should you?" she faltered. "But how terrible, how unspeakably awful!"

"I'm sorry," Lanyard mumbled. "I'd have held my tongue if I hadn't thought you knew—"

"You thought I knew—and didn't lift a finger to save the man?" She jumped up, with a blazing face. "Oh, how could you?"

"No—not that—I never thought that. But, meeting you then and there, so opportunely — I couldn't ignore the coincidence; and when you admitted you were running away from your father, considering all the circumstances, I was surely justified in thinking it was realization, in part, at least, of what had happened that was driving you away."

She shook her head slowly, her indignation ebbing as fast as it had risen.

"I understand," she said; "you had some excuse, but you were not right. I ran away—yes—but not because of that. I never dreamed—"

She fell silent, sitting with bowed head and twisting her hands together in a way he found it painful to watch.

"But please," he implored, "don't take it so much to heart, Miss Bannon. If you knew nothing, you couldn't have prevented it."

"No," she said brokenly, "I could have done nothing if I had known. But I didn't. It isn't that—it's the horror and pity of it. And that you could think—"

"But I didn't!" he protested—"truly I did not. And for what I did think, for the injustice I did do you, believe me, I'm truly sorry."

"You were quite justified," she said, "not only by the testimony of appearances, but to a degree, in fact. You must know—now I must tell you—"

"Nothing you don't wish to!" he interrupted quickly. "The fact that I practically kidnaped you under pretense of doing you a service, and suspected you of being a spy of that Pack, gives me no title to your confidence."

"Can I blame you for thinking what you did?" She went on slowly, without looking up — gaze steadfast to her interlaced fingers: "Now, for my own sake, I want you to know what otherwise, perhaps, I shouldn't have told you—not yet, at all events. I'm no more Bannon's daughter than you're his son. Our names sound alike—people frequently make the same mistake. My name is Shannon—Lucy Shannon. Mr. Bannon called me Lucia because he knew I didn't like it and wanted to tease me; for the same reason he always kept up the pretense that I was his daughter when people misunderstood."

"But—if that is so—then what—"

"Why — it's very simple." Still she didn't look up. "I'm a trained nurse. Mr. Bannon is consumptive—so far gone, it's a wonder he didn't die years ago—for months I've been haunted by the thought that it's only the evil in him keeps him alive. It wasn't long after I took the assignment to nurse him that I found out something about him. He'd had a hemorrhage at his desk, and while he lay in coma, and I waited for the doctor, I happened to notice and in part read one of the papers he'd been working over when he fell. And then, just as I began to appreciate the sort of man I was employed by, he came to, and saw—and knew.

"I found him watching me with those awful eyes of his, and though he was unable to speak, I realized that my life wasn't safe if ever I breathed a word of what I had read. I would have left him then, but he was too cunning for me, and when in time I found a chance to escape—I was afraid, knew I'd not live long if ever I left him. He went about it deliberately to keep me frightened, and though he never mentioned the matter directly, let me know plainly, in a hundred ways, what his power was and what would happen if I told what I knew. It's nearly a year now — nearly a year of endless terror and—"

Her voice fell; she was trembling with the recrudescent suffering of that year-long servitude. And for a little Lanyard felt too profoundly moved to trust himself to speak; he stood aghast, staring down at this woman, so intrinsically and gently feminine, so strangely strong and courageous, and vaguely envisaging what anguish must have been hers in enforced association with a creature of Bannon's ruthless stamp, he was rent with compassion and swore to himself he'd stand by her and see her through and free and happy if he died for it—or ended in the Santé!

"Poor child!" he heard himself murmuring—"poor child!"

"Don't pity me!" she insisted, still with face averted. "I don't deserve it. If I had the spirit of a mouse I'd have defied him; it needed only courage enough to whisper one word to the police—"

"But who is he, then?" Lanyard demanded. "What is he, I mean?"

"I hardly know how to tell you. And I hardly dare. I feel as if these walls would betray me if I whispered even. But to me he's the incarnation of all things evil."

She shook herself with a nervous laugh.

"But why be silly about it? I don't really know what or who he is. I only suspect and believe that he is a man whose life is devoted to planning evil and ordering its execution through his lieutenants. When the papers at home speak of 'The Man Higher Up' they mean Archer Bannon, though they don't know it—or else I'm merely a hysterical woman exaggerating the impressions of a morbid imagination. And that's all I know of him that matters."

"But why, if you believe this—how did you at length find courage—"

"Because I had no more courage to endure; because I was more afraid to stay with him than to go—afraid lest my own soul be the forfeit. And then, last night, he ordered me to go to your room and search it for evidence that you were the Lone Wolf. It was the first time he'd ever asked anything of the sort of me. I was afraid, and obeyed; but I was glad when you interrupted me—glad, even though I had to lie to you the way I did. And all that worked on me, after I'd gone back to my room, until I felt I could stand it no longer, and after a long time, when the house seemed all still, I got up, dressed quietly, and— That is how I came to meet you—quite by accident."

"But you seemed so frightened at first when you saw me—"

"I was," she confessed simply; "I thought you were Mr. Greggs."

"Greggs?"

"Mr. Bannon's private secretary — his right-hand man. He's about your height and has a suit like the one you wear, and in that poor light and at the distance I didn't notice you were clean-shaven — Greggs wears a mustache—"

"Then it was Greggs murdered Roddy and tried to drug me! I shaved off his mustache when I left him there to wait for the police. By George, I'd like to know whether they got there before Bannon or somebody else discovered the substitution. It was a telegram to the *préfecture,* you know, I sent from the Bourse last night!"

In his excitement Lanyard began to pace the floor, and now that he was no longer staring at her, the girl lifted her head and watched him closely as he moved to and fro, talking aloud—more to himself than to her.

"I wish I knew! And what a lucky thing you did meet me; for if you'd gone on to the Gare du Nord and waited there—well, it isn't likely Bannon didn't discover your flight before eight o'clock this morning, is it?"

"I'm afraid not."

"And they've drawn the dead-line for me round every conceivable exit from Paris. Popinot's Apaches are picketed everywhere. And if Bannon had found out about you in time it would have needed only a word—"

He paused and shuddered to think what might have ensued had that word been spoken and the girl been caught waiting for her train in the Gare du Nord.

"Mercifully, we've escaped that. And now, with any sort of luck, Bannon ought to be busy enough, trying to get—or keep—his precious Mr. Greggs out of the Santé, to give us a chance. And a fighting chance is all I ask."

"Mr. Lanyard"—the girl bent toward him across the table with a gesture of eager interest—"have you any idea why he—why Mr. Bannon hates you so?"

"But does he? I don't know!"

"If he doesn't, why does he connive in a plot to cast suspicion of murder on you? Why was he so anxious to know whether you were really the Lone Wolf? I saw his eyes light up when De Morbihan mentioned that name after dinner; and if ever I saw hatred in a man's face, it was in his as he watched you when you weren't looking."

"As far as I know, I never heard of him before," Lanyard said carelessly. "I fancy it was nothing more than the excitement of a man-hunt. Now that they've found me out, De Morbihan and his crew won't rest until they've got my scalp."

"But why is that?"

"Professional jealousy. We're all crooks, all in the same boat, only I won't row to their stroke. I've always played a lone hand successfully; now they insist on coming into the game and sharing my winnings. And I've told them where they could go."

"And because of that, they'd—"

"There's nothing they wouldn't do, Miss Shannon, to bring me to my knees or see me put well out of the way, where my operations can't hurt their pocketbooks. Well—all I ask is a fighting chance, and they shall have their way!"

Her brows contracted. "I don't understand. You want a fighting chance—to surrender—to give in to their demands?"

"In a way—yes. I want a fighting chance to do what I'd never in the world get them to believe I mean to do—chuck it all up and leave them a free field."

And then, when still she searched his face with puzzled eyes, he insisted: "I mean it; I want to get away—clear out—chuck the game for good and all!"

A little silence greeted this announcement. Lanyard, at pause near the table, resting a hand on it, bent to the girl's upturned face a grave but candid regard. And the deeps of her eyes that never swerved from his were troubled strangely in his vision.

He could by no means account for the light he seemed to see therein—a light that kindled while he watched, like a tiny flame, feeble, fearful, vacillant; then, as the moments passed, steadied and grew stronger, but ever leaped and danced, so that he, lost in the wonder of it and forgetful of himself, thought of it as the ardent face of a happy child dancing in the depths of some brown autumnal woodland.

"You," she breathed incredulously—"you mean you're going to stop—"

"I have stopped, Miss Shannon. The Lone Wolf has prowled for the last time. I didn't know it till just now—when I woke up an hour or so ago—but I've turned my last job."

"But why?" she demanded in bewilderment. "But why do you say that? What can have happened to make you—"

"Not fear of that Pack!" he laughed—"not that, I promise you. If I thought Paris too small for them and me I'd never leave it alive!"

"Oh, I know!" she said impatiently—"I know that very well. But still I don't understand."

"If it won't bore you, I'll try to explain." He drew up his chair and sat down again, facing her across the littered table. "I don't suppose you've ever stopped to consider what an essentially stupid animal a crook must be. Most of them are stupid because they practise clumsily one of the most difficult professions imaginable, and inevitably fail at it, yet persist. They wouldn't think of undertaking a difficult piece of engineering without any sort of preparation, but they'll tackle a dangerous proposition in burglary without a thought and pay for failure with years of imprisonment, and once out, try it again. That's one kind of criminal—the ninety-nine-per-cent class—incurably stupid!

"There's another class, men whose imaginations forewarn them of dangers and whose mental training, technical equipment, and sheer manual dexterity enable them to attack a formidable proposition like a modern safe—by way of illustration—and force its secret. They're the successful criminals, like myself—but they're no less stupid, no less failures than the other ninety-nine in our every hundred, because they never stop to think. It never occurs to them that the same intelligence, applied to any one of the trades they must be masters of, would not only pay them better, but leave them their self-respect and rid them forever of the haunting dread of arrest that dogs us all like the memory of some shameful act. All of which is much more of a lecture than I meant to inflict upon you, Miss Shannon, and sums up to just this: *I've* stopped to think."

With this he stopped for breath as well and momentarily was silent, his faint, twisted smile testifying to self-consciousness; but presently, seeing that she didn't offer to interrupt, but continued to give him her attention so exclusively that it had the effect of fascination, he stumbled on, at first less confidently.

"When I woke up just now it was as if, without my will, I had been thinking all this out in my sleep. I saw myself for the first time clearly, as I have been ever since I can remember — a crook, thoughtless, vain, rapacious, ruthless, skulking in shadows and thinking myself an amazingly fine fellow because, between *coups,* I would play the gentleman a bit, venture into the light, and swagger in the haunts of the respectable. In my poor, perverted brain I believed there was something fine and thrilling and romantic in the career of a great criminal and myself a wonderful figure—an enemy of society—potentially as deadly as a rattlesnake, always ready to kill—if I never did!"

"Why do you say this to me?" she demanded abruptly out of a phase of profound thoughtfulness.

He lifted an apologetic shoulder and laughed with a sheepish air.

"Because, I presume, I'm no longer self-sufficient. I was all of that twenty-four hours ago, but now I'm as lonesome as a lost child in a dark forest. I haven't a friend in the world. I'm like a stray pup, groveling for sympathy. And you—are unfortunate enough to be the only person I can declare myself to. It's going to be a fight—I know that too well—and without something outside myself to struggle toward I'll be heavily handicapped. But if"—he faltered, with a look of wistful earnestness—"if I thought that you, perhaps, were a little interested, that I had won your faith and had that to respect and cherish—if I dared hope that you'd be glad to know I had won out against odds—it would mean a great deal to me; it might mean my salvation!"

Watching her narrowly, hanging upon her decision with the anxiety of a man proscribed and hoping against hope for pardon, he saw her eyes cloud and shift from his, her lips parted but hesitant, and before she could speak he hastily interposed:

"Please don't say anything yet. First let me demonstrate my sincerity. So far I've done nothing to persuade you but—talk and talk and talk! But give me half a chance to prove I mean what I say."

"How"—she enunciated only with visible effort and no longer met his appeal with an open countenance—"how can you do that?"

"In the long run, by establishing myself in some honest way of life, however modest; but now, and principally, by making reparation for at least one crime I've committed that's not irreparable."

He caught her quick glance of inquiry and met it with a confident nod as he placed between them the morocco-bound jewel-case.

"In London, yesterday," he said quietly, "I brought off two big *coups.* One was deliberate, the other the inspiration of a moment. The one I'd planned for months was the theft of the Omber jewels—here."

He tapped the case, then resumed in the same manner: "The other—needs a diagram. Not long ago a Frenchman named Huysman, living in Tours, was mysteriously murdered—a poor inventor, who had starved himself to perfect a stabilizator, an attachment for aeroplanes which renders them practically fool-proof. His final trials had created a sensation, and he was on the eve of selling his invention to the government when he was killed and his plans stolen.

"Circumstantial evidence pointed to an international spy named Ekstrom—Adolph Ekstrom, once chief of the aviation corps of the German army, cashiered for general blackguardism—with a suspicion of treason to boot. However, Ekstrom kept under cover, and presently the plans turned up in the German war office. That was a big thing for Germany; already supreme with her dirigibles, the acquisition of the Huysman stabilizator promised her ten years' lead over the world in the field of aeroplanes.

"Now, yesterday, Elkstrom came to the surface in London with those selfsame plans to sell to England. Chance threw him my way, and he mistook me for the man he'd expected to meet — Downing Street's secret agent. Well—no matter how — I got the plans from him and brought them over with me, meaning to turn them over to France, to whom, by rights, they belong."

"Without consideration?" the girl inquired shrewdly.

"Not exactly. I had meant to make no profit of the affair—I'm a bit squeamish about tainted money—but under present conditions, if France insists on rewarding me with safe conduct out of the country, I sha'n't refuse it. Do you approve?"

She nodded earnestly. "It would be worse than criminal to return them to Ekstrom."

"That's my view of the matter."

"But these?" The girl rested her hand upon the jewel-case.

"Those go back to Mme. Omber. She has a home here in Paris that I know well. In fact, the sole reason why I didn't steal them here was that she left for England unexpectedly, just as I was all set to strike. Now I purpose to use my knowledge of her house to restore the jewels without risk of falling into the hands of the police. That will be an easy matter. And that brings me to the one great favor I would beg of you."

She gave him a look so unexpectedly kind that it staggered him. But he had himself well in hand.

"You can't leave Paris now before morning—thanks to my having overslept," he continued. "There's no honest way I know to raise money before morning opens the pawn-shops. But I'm hoping that won't be necessary; I'm trusting I can arrange matters for us without going to that extreme. Meanwhile — you agree that these jewels must be returned?"

"Of course," she affirmed gently.

"Then—will you accompany me when I replace them? There won't be the slightest danger. I promise you that. Indeed, it would be more hazardous for you to wait for me elsewhere while I attended to the matter alone. And I'd like you to be convinced of my sincerity."

"Don't you think you can trust me for that as well?" she asked with a flash of humor.

"Trust you!"

"To believe. Mr. Lanyard," she told him earnestly, "I do believe!"

"You make me very happy," he said—"but I'd like you to see for yourself. And I'd be glad not to have to fret about your safety in my absence. As a bureau of espionage, Popinot's brigade of Apaches are without a peer in Europe. I'm positively afraid to leave you alone."

She was silent.

"Will you come with me, Miss Shannon?"

"That is your sole reason for asking this of me?" she insisted, eying him steadily.

"That I wish you to believe in me—yes."

"Why?" she pursued, inexorable.

"Because—I've already told you."

"That you want some one's good opinion to cherish. But why, of all people, me—whom you hardly know, of whom what little you do know is hardly reassuring?"

He colored, and boggled his answer. "I can't tell you," he admitted in the end.

"Why can't you tell me?"

He stared at her miserably. "I've no right. In spite of all I've said, in spite of the faith you so generously promise me, in your eyes I must still figure as a thief, a liar, an impostor — self-confessed. Men aren't remade by mere protestations, nor even by their own efforts, in an hour, or a day, or a week. But give me a year. If I can live a year in honesty, and earn my bread, and so prove my strength—then, perhaps, I might find the courage, the—the effrontery to tell you why I want your good opinion. Now I've said far more than I meant or had any right to. I hope," he ventured pleadingly, "you're not offended."

Only an instant longer could she maintain her direct and unflinching look. Then his meaning would no more be ignored. Her lashes fell, a tide of crimson flooded her face, and with a quick movement, pushing her chair a little from the table, she turned away from him. But she said nothing.

He remained as he had been, bending eagerly toward her.

And in the long minute that elapsed before either spoke again, both became oddly conscious of the silence brooding in that lonely little house, of their isolation from the world, of their common peril and mutual dependence.

"I'm afraid," Lanyard said after a time—"I'm afraid I know what you must be thinking. One can't do your intelligence the injustice to imagine you haven't understood me—read all that was in my mind and"—his voice fell—"in my heart. I own that I was wrong to speak so transparently, to suggest my regard for you at such a time, under such conditions. I am truly sorry, and beg you to consider unsaid all that I should not have said. After all, what earthly difference can it make to you if one thief more decides suddenly to reform?"

That brought her abruptly to her feet, showing him a face of glowing loveliness, with eyes distractingly dimmed and softened.

"No!" she implored breathlessly. "Please, you mustn't spoil it! You've paid me the finest of compliments, and one I'm glad and grateful for—and would I might think I deserved! You say you need a year to prove yourself? Then—I've no right to say this—and you must please not ask me what I mean—then I grant you that year. A year I shall wait to hear from you from the day we part, here in Paris. And to-night I will go with you, too, and gladly, since you wish me to!"

And then as he, having risen, stood at loss, thrilled and incredulous, with a brave and generous gesture she offered him her hand, across the table whereon still rested the spoils of his final *coup*.

"Mr. Lanyard, I promise."

To every woman, even the least lovely, her hour of beauty—it had not entered Lanyard's mind to think this woman beautiful until that moment. Of her exotic charm, of the allure of her pensive, wistful prettiness, he had been well aware, even as he had been unable to deny to himself that he was all for her, that he loved her with all the strength that was his; but not till now had he understood that she was the one woman whose loveliness to him would dim the beauty of all other women.

And for a little, while he held her hand tremulous upon his finger-tips, as though he feared to bruise it with ruder contact, he could not take his eyes from her.

Then reverently he bowed his head and touched his lips to that hand—and felt it snatched swiftly away, and started back, aghast, the idyl roughly dissipated, the castle of his dreams tumbling in thunders round his ears.

In the studio skylight overhead a pane of glass had fallen in with a shattering crash as ominous as the trump of doom.

CHAPTER XIV

"FOR THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE"

LIKE a blow from an unseen hand the shock of that alarm drove the girl back from the table to the nearest wall and for a moment held her there transfixed in panic.

To her wide, staring eyes that questioned his so urgently Lanyard promptly nodded grave reassurance. He hadn't stirred after his first involuntary start, and before the last fragment of splintered glass had fallen tinkling to the floor above, he was calming her in the most matter-of-fact tones.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "It's nothing—merely Solon's skylight gone smash!"

"But you call that nothing!" she cried gustily. "What caused it, then?"

"My negligence," he admitted gloomily. "I might have known it—that wide spread of glass, with the studio electrics full blaze below, would give the show away completely. The house is known to be unoccupied, and it wasn't to be expected that both the police and Popinot's crew would overlook so shining a mark. And it's all my fault, my oversight. I should have warned you about the lights! High time I was quitting a game I've no longer the wit to play by the rules!"

"But the police would never—"

"Certainly not. This is merely Popinot's gentle method of informing us he's on the job. But I'll just have a look to make sure. No — stop where you are, please. I'd rather go alone."

He swung alertly through to the reception-hall window, pausing there only long enough for an instantaneous reconnaissance through the draperies—a fugitive survey that discovered the Impasse Stanislas no more abandoned to the wind and rain, but tenanted visibly by one, at least, who lounged beneath the lonely lamp-post, a shoulder against it—a featureless civilian silhouette with attention fixed on the little house.

But Lanyard didn't doubt that this one had a dozen fellows skulking within call.

Springing up the stairs, he paused prudently at the topmost step, one quick glance showing him the huge rent gaping black in the middle of the skylight, the second the missile of destruction lying amid a litter of broken glass — a brick wrapped in newspaper by the look of it.

Swooping forward, he retrieved this and darted back from the exposed space beneath the shattered skylight barely in the nick of time, for he had no more than cleared the threshold than a second something fell through the gap and buried itself in the hardwood parquetry. This last was a bullet fired from the roof of one of the adjoining buildings, confirming his prior reasoning that the first missile must have fallen from a height rather than have been thrown up from the street to wreak such destruction with those tough, thick panes of clouded glass.

Swearing softly to himself, he descended to the kitchen.

"As I thought," he said coolly, exhibiting his find. "They're on the roof of the next house — though they've stationed a sentry in the street, of course."

"But that second thump—" the girl demanded.

"A bullet," he answered, placing the bundle on the table and cutting the string that bound it; "they were on the *qui vive* and fired the instant I showed myself beneath the skylight."

"But I heard no report," she retorted.

"A Maxim silencer on the gun, I fancy," he explained, unwrapping the brick and smoothing out the newspaper. "Glad you thought to put on your hat and coat before you came down," he added with an approving glance; "it wouldn't be safe to go up to the studio again—of course."

His nonchalance was far less real than it seemed, but helped to steady one who was holding herself together with a struggle.

"But what are we to do now?" she stammered. "If they've surrounded the house—"

"Don't worry—there's more than one way out," he responded, frowning at the newspaper; "I wouldn't have picked this place out otherwise. Nor would Solon have rented it in the first instance had it lacked an exit in event of creditors. Ah—thought so!"

"What—"

"Troyon's is gone," he said, without looking up. "This is to-night's *Presse*. 'Totally destroyed by fire which started at six thirty this morning and in less than half an hour had reduced the ancient structure to a heap of smoking ashes!'" He ran his eye quickly down the column, selecting salient phrases: "'Believed to have been of incendiary origin, though the premises were uninsured' — that's an intelligent guess! 'Narrow escape of guests in their' — whatyemaycallems. 'Three lives believed to have been lost—one body recovered, charred almost beyond recognition' — Roddy's, of course — poor devil! 'Two guests missing, M. Lanyard, the well-known connoisseur of art, who occupied the room adjoining that of the unfortunate detective, and Mlle. Bannon, daughter of the American millionaire, who himself escaped only by a miracle with his secretary, M. Greggs, the latter being overcome by fumes' — what a shame! 'Police and firemen searching the ruins' —h-m, h-m—'extraordinary interest manifested by the *préfecture* indicates a suspicion that the building may have been fired to conceal some crime of a political nature.'"

Crushing the newspaper between his hands, Lanyard tossed it into a corner.

"That's all of importance. Thoughtful of Popinot to let me know this way! The *préfecture*, of course, is humming like a wasp's nest with the mystery of that telegram signed with Roddy's name and handed in at the Bourse an hour or so before he was 'burned to death'—no wonder! Too bad I didn't know then what I do now; if I'd even remotely suspected

Greggs's association with the Pack was *via* Bannon. But what's the use? I did my possible, knowing the odds were heavy against success."

"What was written on the paper?" the girl demanded obliquely.

He made his eyes blank. "Written on the paper—"

"I saw something in red ink at the head of the column. You tried to hide it from me, but I saw. What was it?"

"Oh—that!" He laughed contemptuously. "Just Popinot's impudence—an invitation to come out and be a good target."

She shook her head impatiently. "You're not telling me the truth. It was something else, or you wouldn't have been so anxious to hide it."

"Oh, but I assure you—"

"You can't. Be honest with me, Mr. Lanyard. It was an offer to let you off if you'd give me up to Bannon—wasn't it?"

"Something like that," he assented a bit sheepishly—"too absurd for consideration. But now we're due to clear out of this before they find a way in. Not that they're likely to risk raiding us until they've tried starving us out, but it would be as well to put a good distance between us before they find out we've decamped."

He shrugged himself into his borrowed rain-coat, buttoned it to his chin, and turned down the brim of his soft felt hat; but when he looked up at the girl again he found she hadn't moved; rather, she remained as one spellbound by thought, staring less at than through him, her expression inscrutable.

"Well," he ventured—"if you're quite ready, Miss Shannon—"

"Mr. Lanyard," she demanded almost sharply, "what was the full wording of that message?"

"If you must know—"

"I must!"

He lifted a depreciative shoulder. "If you like, I'll read it to you—or, rather, translate it from the thieves' *argot* Popinot complimented me by using."

"Not necessary," she said tersely. "I'll take your word for it. But you must tell me the truth."

"As you will. Popinot delicately suggested that if I leave you here, to be reunited to your alleged parent—if I'll trust to his word of honor, that is, and walk out of the house alone, he'll give me twenty-four hours in which to leave Paris."

"Then only I stand between you and—"

"My dear young woman!" he protested hastily. "Please don't run away with any absurd notion like that. Do you imagine I'd consent to treat with such *canaille* under any circumstances?"

"All the same," she contended stubbornly, "I'm the stumbling-block. You're risking your life for me—"

"I'm not," he insisted almost angrily.

"You are," she returned with quiet conviction.

"Well," he laughed, "have it your own way! But it's *my* life, isn't it? I really don't see how you're going to prevent my risking it for anything that may seem to me worth the risk!"

But she wouldn't laugh; only her countenance, suddenly bereft of its mutinous expression, softened winningly—and her eyes grew very kind to him.

"As long as it's understood I understand—very well," she said quietly, "I'll do as you wish, Mr. Lanyard."

"Good!" he cried cheerfully. "I wish, by your leave, to take you out to dinner. This way, please!"

Leading her through the scullery, he unbarred and swung open a low, arched door in one of the walls, uncovering the black mouth of a narrow and tunnel-like passageway that ran off at right angles from the side of the house.

With a word of caution, flash-lamp in his left hand, pistol in right, Lanyard stepped out into the darkness.

In two minutes he was back with a look of relief.

"All clear," he reported; "I felt pretty sure Popinot was ignorant of this emergency exit—else we'd have entertained uninvited guests long since. Now, half a minute."

The electric meter occupied a place on the wall of the scullery not far from the door. Prying open its cover, he unscrewed and removed the fuse-plug, plunging the entire house in complete darkness.

"That'll keep 'em guessing a while!" he explained with a chuckle. "They'll hesitate a long time before rushing a dark house infested by a desperate armed man—if I know anything about that mongrel crew! Besides, when they do get their courage up, the lack of light will stave off discovery of this way of escape. And now, one word more."

A flash of the lamp located her hand.

Calmly he possessed himself of it.

"I've brought you into trouble enough as it is through my stupidity," he said; "but for that, this place should have been a refuge to us until we were quite ready to leave Paris. So now we mustn't forget, before we go out to run God only knows what gantlet, to fix a rendezvous in event of separation. Popinot, for instance, may have drawn a cordon around the block; we can't tell until we're in the street; if he has, you must leave me to keep them interested and—ah—diverted until you're safe beyond their reach. Oh, don't worry—I'm perfectly well able to take care of myself. But afterward we must know where to find each other. Hotels, cafés, and restaurants are out of the question—in the first place, we've barely money enough for our dinner; besides, all such places are certain to be watched closely. Our embassies and consulates aren't open at all hours, and will likewise be watched. There remain—unless you can suggest something—only the churches; and I can think of none better suited to our purposes than the Sacré-Cœur."

Her fingers tightened gently upon his.

"I understand," she said quietly; "if we're obliged to separate I'm to go direct to the Sacré-Cœur up on the hilltop and await you there."

"Right! But let's hope there'll be no such necessity."

Then, hand in hand, like frightened children, these two stole down the tunnel-like passageway, through a small, forlorn court, more like a well, cramped between two tall old tenements, and so came out into the gloomy, sinuous, and silent Rue d'Assas.

Here they encountered few wayfarers; and to those few, preoccupied with anxiety to win to shelter from the inclement night, they seemed, no doubt, some student of the Quartier with his sweetheart—Lanyard, in his shabby rain-coat, striding rapidly, head and shoulders bowed against the driving mist, the girl in her trim Burberry clinging trustfully to his arm.

Avoiding the nearer stops of the underground Métropolitain as dangerous, Lanyard steered a roundabout course through byways to the Rue de Sèvres station of the Nord-Sud, from which, in due course, they climbed to the surface again at the Place de la Concorde, walked several blocks, picked up a taxicab, and in less than half an hour from the time of their departure from the Impasse Stanislas were comfortably ensconced in a *cabinet particulier* of a little restaurant of modest pretensions just north of Les Halles.

They feasted famously—the cuisine, if *bourgeoise,* was admirable and, better still, well within the resources of Lanyard's emaciated purse. Nor did he fret that, when the bill had been paid and the essential tips bestowed, there would remain in his pocket little more than cab-fare. Supremely self-confident, he harbored no doubts of a smiling future—now that the dark pages in his record had been turned and sealed by a resolution he held irrevocable.

His spirits had mounted to a high pitch, thanks to their successful evasion. He was young, he was in love, he was hungry, he was—in short—very much alive. And the consciousness of common peril knitted an enchanting intimacy into their talk.

For the first time in his history Lanyard found himself in the company of a woman to whom he dared—and cared—to speak without reserve—a circumstance intrinsically intoxicating. And stimulated by her unquestionable interest and sympathy, he did talk without reserve—of old Troyon's and its drudge Marcel, of Bourke and his wanderings, of the education of the Lone Wolf and his career, less in pride than in relief that it was ended, of the future he must achieve for himself.

And, sitting with chin cradled on the backs of her interlaced fingers, the girl listened with such indulgence as women find always for their lovers. Of herself she had little to say. Lanyard filled in to his taste the outlines of the simple history of the young woman of good family obliged to become self-supporting.

And if at times her grave eyes clouded and her attention wandered, it was less in *ennui* than because of occult trains of thought set in motion by some chance word or phrase of Lanyard's.

"I'm boring you," he suggested once with quick contrition, waking up to the fact that he'd monopolized the conversation for many minutes on end.

She shook a pensive head. "No, again. But, I wonder, do you appreciate the magnitude of the task you've set yourself?"

"Possibly not," he conceded arrogantly; "but it doesn't matter. The heavier the odds, the greater the incentive to win."

"But," she objected, "you've told me a curious story of one who never had a chance or incentive to 'go straight'—as you put it. And yet you seem to think that an overnight resolution to reform is all that's needed to change all the habits of a lifetime. You persuade me of your sincerity of to-day; but how will it be with you to-morrow—and not so much to-morrow as six months from to-morrow, when you've found the going rough and know you've only to take one step aside to gain a smooth and easy way?"

"If I fail, then, it will be because I'm unfit — and I'll go under and never be heard of again. But I sha'n't fail. It seems to me the very fact that I want to go straight is proof enough that I've something inherently decent in me to build on."

"I do believe that, and yet—" She lowered her head and began to trace a meaningless pattern on the cloth before she resumed. "You've given me to understand that I'm responsible for your sudden awakening—that it's because of a regard conceived for me you're so anxious to become an honest man. Suppose—suppose you were to find out — you'd been mistaken in me?"

"That isn't possible," he objected promptly.

She smiled upon him wistfully.

"But if it were—"

"Then—I think," he said soberly—"I think I'd feel as though there were nothing but emptiness beneath my feet!"

"And you'd—backslide?"

"How can I tell?" he expostulated. "It's not a fair question. I don't know what I'd do, but I do know it would need something damnable to shake my faith in you!"

"You think so now," she said tolerantly. "But if appearances were against me—"

"They'd have to be black!"

"If you found I had deceived you—"

"Miss Shannon!" He threw an arm across the table and suddenly imprisoned her hand. "There's no use beating about the bush. You've got to know—"

She drew back suddenly with a frightened look and a monosyllable of sharp remonstrance: "No!"

"But you must listen to me. I want you to understand. Bourke used to say to me: 'The man who lets love into his life opens a door no mortal hand can close —and God only knows what will follow in!' And Bourke was right. Now that door is open in my heart, and I think that whatever follows in won't be evil or degrading. Oh, I've said it a dozen different ways of indirection, but I may as well say it squarely now. I love you; it's love of you makes me want to go straight, in the hope that when I've proved myself you'll maybe let me ask you to marry me.

"Perhaps you're in love with a better man to-day; but I'm willing to chance that; a year brings many changes. Perhaps there's something I don't fathom in your doubting my strength and constancy. Only the outcome can declare that. But please understand this: if I fail to make good it will be solely because I'm unfit and have proved it. All I ask is what you've generously promised me—opportunity to come to you at the end of the year and make my report. And then, if you will, you can say no to the question I'll ask you, and I sha'n't resent it, and it won't ruin me; for if a man can stick to a purpose for a year he can stick to it forever, with or without the love of the woman he loves."

She heard him out without attempt at interruption, but her answer was prefaced by a sad little shake of her head.

"That's what makes it so hard, so terribly hard," she said. "Of course I've understood you—all that you've said by indirection, and much besides, has had its meaning to me—and I'm glad and proud of the honor you offer me. But I can't accept it, I can never accept it—not now nor a year from now. And it isn't fair to let you go on hoping that I might some time consent to marry you. For that's impossible."

"You—forgive me—you're not already married?"

"No."

"Or promised?"

"No."

"Or in love with some one else?"

Again she told him, gently, "No."

His face cleared. He squared his shoulders. He even mustered up a smile.

"Then it isn't impossible. No human obstacle exists that time can't overthrow. In spite of all you say, I shall go on hoping with all my heart and soul and strength."

"But you don't understand—"

"Can you tell me — make me understand?"

After a long pause she told him once more, and very sadly: "No."

CHAPTER XV

SHEER IMPUDENCE

THOUGH it was not yet eight o'clock when they entered the restaurant, it was something after eleven before Lanyard called for his bill.

"We've plenty of time," he had explained; "it'll be midnight before we can move. The gentle art of housebreaking has its technique, you know, and its ethics—we can't well violate the privacy of Mme. Omber's strong-box before the caretakers on the premises are sound asleep. It isn't *done,* you know—it isn't class to go burglarizing when decent, law-abiding folk are wide awake. Meantime we're better off here than trapesing the streets."

It's a silent web of side ways and a gloomy one by night that backs up north of Les Halles—old Paris, grim, taciturn, and somber, steeped in its memories of savage romance. But for infrequent corner lamps, the street that welcomed them from the doors of the warm and cozy restaurant was as dismal as an alley in some city of the dead. Its houses, with their mansard roofs and boarded windows, bent their heads together like mutes at a wake, black-cloaked and hooded; seldom one showed a light; never one betrayed by any sound the life that lurked behind its jealous blinds.

Now again the rain had ceased and, though the sky remained overcast, the atmosphere was clear and brisk with a touch of frost, in grateful contrast to the dull and muggy air that had obtained for the last twenty-four hours.

"We'll walk," Lanyard suggested—"if you don't mind—part of the way at least; it'll eat up time, and a bit of exercise will do us both good."

The girl assented quietly.

The drum of their heels on fast-drying sidewalks struck sharp echoes from the silence of that drowsy quarter, a lonely clamor that rendered it impossible to ignore their apparent solitude—as impossible as it was for Lanyard to ignore the fact that they were followed.

The shadow dogging them on the far side of the street, some fifty yards behind, was as noiseless as any cat; but for this circumstance Lanyard would have been slow to believe it was concerned with him, so confident had he felt, till that moment, of having given the Pack the slip.

And from this he diagnosed still another symptom of the Pack's incurable stupidity!

Supremely on the alert, he had discovered the pursuit before they left the block of the restaurant. Dissembling, partly to avoid alarming the girl, partly to trick the follower into a feeling of greater security, he turned this way and that, round several corners, until quite convinced that the shadow was dedicated to himself exclusively, then promptly revised his prior purpose and, instead of sticking to darker backways, struck out directly for the broad, well-lighted, and lively Boulevard Sébastopol.

Crossing this without another backward glance, he turned north, seeking some café whose arrangements suited his designs; and, presently, though not before their tramp had brought them almost to the line of the Grand Boulevards, found one to his taste, a cheerful and well-lighted establishment situated upon a corner, with entrances from both streets. A hedge of forlorn fir-trees knee-deep in wooden tubs guarded its collection of round, metal tables and spindle-shanked chairs, of which few were occupied. Inside, visible through the wide plate-glass windows, perhaps a dozen patrons sat round half as many tables — no more — idling over dominoes and gossip—steady-paced burghers with their wives, men in small ways of business in the neighborhood.

Entering to this company, Lanyard selected a square, marble-topped table against the back wall, entrenched himself with the girl upon the plush-upholstered seat behind it, ordered coffee and writing materials, and proceeded to light a cigarette with the nonchalance of one to whom time is of no consequence.

"What is it?" the girl asked guardedly, as the waiter scurried off to execute his commands. "You've not stopped in here for nothing!"

"True—but lower, please!" he begged. "If we speak English loud enough to be heard it will attract attention. The trouble is, we're followed. But as yet our faithful shadow doesn't know we know it—unless he's more intelligent than he seems. Consequently, if I don't misjudge him, he'll take a table outside, the better to keep an eye on us, as soon as he sees we're apparently settled for some time. More than that, I've got a note to write—and not merely as a subterfuge. This fellow must be shaken off, and as long as we stick together that can't very well be done."

He interrupted himself while the waiter served them, then sugared his coffee, arranged the ink-bottle and paper to his satisfaction, and bent over his pen.

"Come closer," he requested—"as if you were interested in what I'm writing—and amused; if you can laugh a bit at nothing, so much the better. But keep a sharp eye on the windows. You can do that more readily than I under cover of the brim of your hat. And let me know what you see."

He had no more than settled into the swing of composition than the girl—apparently following his pen with closest attention—giggled coquettishly and nudged his elbow.

"The window to the right of the door we came in," she murmured, smiling delightedly; "he's standing behind the fir-trees, staring in."

"Can you make him out?" Lanyard asked without moving his lips.

"No more than that he's tall," she said with every indication of enjoying a most tremendous joke. "His face is all in shadow."

"Patience!" counseled the adventurer. "He'll take heart of courage when convinced of our innocence."

He poised his pen, scrutinized the ceiling for inspiration, and permitted a slow smile to irradiate his features.

"You'll take this note, if you please," he said cheerfully, "to the address on the envelope, by taxi—it's some distance, near the Étoile. A long chance, but one we must risk; give me half an hour alone, and I guarantee to discourage this animal one way or another. You understand?"

"Perfectly!" she laughed archly.

He bent over and for a few moments wrote busily.

"Now he's walking slowly round the corner, never taking his eyes from you," the girl reported, shoulder to shoulder and head distractingly near his head.

"Good. Can you see him any better?"

"Not yet."

"This note," he said, without stopping his pen or appearing to say anything, "is for the *concierge* of a building where I rent stabling for a little, closed car I find occasionally useful. I'm supposed there to be a chauffeur in the employ of a crazy Englishman who keeps me constantly traveling with him back and forth between Paris and London. That's to account for the irregularity with which I use the car. They know me, *monsieur* and *madame* of the *conciergerie,* as Pierre Lamier; and I *think* they're safe — not only trustworthy and of friendly disposition, but quite simple-minded; I don't believe they gossip much. If so, the chances are De Morbihan and his gang know nothing of the arrangement. But that's all speculation—a forlorn hope!"

"I understand," the girl chuckled at his elbow. "He's still prowling up and down outside the hedge."

"We're not going to need that car tonight; but the home of Mme. Omber is close by; and I'll follow and join you there within an hour at most. Meantime, this note will introduce you to the *concierge* and his wife—I hope you won't mind—as my *fiancée.* I'm telling them we became engaged in England, and I've brought you to Paris to visit my mother in Montrouge, but am detained by my employer's business, and will they please give you shelter for an hour."

"He's coming in," the girl announced quietly.

"In here?"

"No—merely inside the row of little trees."

"Which entrance?"

"On the boulevard side. He's taken the corner table. Now a waiter's going out to him."

"You can see his face now?" Lanyard asked, sealing the note.

"Not well."

"Nothing you recognize about him, eh?"

"Nothing."

"Do you know Popinot or Wertheimer by sight?"

"No; they're only names to me; De Morbihan and Mr. Bannon mentioned them last night."

"It won't be Popinot," Lanyard reflected, addressing the envelope; "he's tubby."

"This man is tall and slender."

"Wertheimer, possibly. Does he suggest an Englishman in any way?"

"Not in the least. He wears a mustache —blond—twisted up like the Kaiser's."

Lanyard made no reply, but his heart sank, and he shivered imperceptibly with foreboding. He entertained no doubt but that the worst had happened, that to the number of his enemies in Paris was added Ekstrom.

One furtive glance confirmed this inference. He swore bitterly, if privately, and with a countenance of childlike blandness, as he sipped the coffee and finished his cigarette.

"Who is it, then?" she asked. "Do you know him?"

He reckoned swiftly against distressing her, recalling his mention of the fact that Ekstrom was credited with the Huysman murder.

"Merely a hanger-on of De Morbihan's," he told her lightly; "a spineless animal—no trouble about scaring him off. Here—take this note, please; we'll go now. But as we reach the door, turn back—and go out the other. You'll find a taxi without trouble. And stop for nothing!"

He had shown foresight in paying when served, and was consequently able to leave abruptly, without giving Ekstrom time to shy. Rising smartly, he pushed the table aside. The girl was no less quick and little less sensitive to the strain of the moment; but as she passed him her lashes lifted and her eyes were all his for the instant.

"Good night," she breathed — "good night—my dear!"

She could have guessed no more shrewdly what he needed to nerve him against the impending clash. He hadn't hesitated as to his only course, but till then he'd been horribly afraid, knowing too well the desperate cast of the outlawed German's nature. But now, since she had spoken, he couldn't fail.

He strode briskly toward the entrance from the boulevard, out of the corner of his eye aware that Ekstrom, taken by surprise, had half started from his chair, then sunk back.

Two paces from the door the girl checked herself, murmured in French, "Oh, my handkerchief!" and turned briskly back.

Without pause, as though he hadn't heard, Lanyard threw the door wide and swung out, turning directly to the spy. At the same time he dropped a hand into the pocket of his rain-coat, where nestled his automatic.

Fortunately Ekstrom had chosen a table in a corner well removed from any in use. Lanyard could speak without fear of being overheard.

But for a moment he refrained. Nor did Ekstrom speak or stir—sitting sidewise at his table, negligently, with knees crossed, the German likewise kept a hand buried in the pocket of his heavy, dark ulster. Thus neither could doubt the other's ill-will or preparedness.

And through thirty seconds of silence they remained at pause, each striving with all his strength to read the other's purpose in his eyes. But there was this distinction to be drawn between their attitudes, that whereas Lanyard's gaze challenged, the German's was sullenly defiant. And presently Lanyard felt his heart stir with relief—the spy's glance had winced.

"Ekstrom," the adventurer said quietly, "if you fire, I'll get you before I fall. That's no boast—a simple statement of fact."

The German hesitated, moistened the corners of his lips with a nervous tongue, but contented himself with a nod of acknowledgment.

"Take your hand off that gun!" Lanyard ordered. "Remember—I've only to cry your name aloud to have you torn to pieces by these people. Your life's not worth a moment's purchase in Paris—as you should know."

The German hesitated; but in his heart conceded that Lanyard didn't exaggerate. The murder of the inventor Huysman had exasperated all France; and though tonight the weather had kept a third of Paris within doors, there was still a tide of pedestrians fluent on the sidewalk, beyond the flimsy barrier of firs, that would thicken to a ravening mob upon the least excuse.

He had mistaken his man; he had thought that Lanyard, even if aware of his pursuit, would seek to shake it off in flight rather than turn and fight—and fight here, of all places!

"Do you hear me?" Lanyard continued in the same level and unyielding tone. "Bring both hands in sight — upon the table!"

There was no more hesitation. Ekstrom obeyed, if with the sullen grace of a wild beast that would and could slay its trainer with one sweep of its paw — if only it dared.

"DO YOU HEAR ME? BRING BOTH HANDS IN SIGHT—UPON THE TABLE!"

For the first time since leaving the girl Lanyard relaxed his vigilant watch over the man long enough for one swift glance through the window at his side. But she was already gone from the café!

He breathed more freely now.

"Come!" he said peremptorily. "Get up. We've got to talk, I presume—thrash this matter out—and we'll come to no decision here."

"Where do we go, then?" the German demanded suspiciously.

"We can walk."

Irresolutely the spy uncrossed his knees, but didn't rise.

"Walk?" he repeated. "Walk where?"

"Up the boulevard, if you like—where the lights are brightest!"

"Ah!"—with a malignant flash of teeth—"but I don't trust you."

Lanyard laughed. "You wear only one shoe of that pair, my dear captain! We're a distrustful flock, we birds of prey! Come along! Why sit there sulking, like a spoiled child? You've made an ass of yourself following me to Paris; sadly though you bungled that job in London, I gave you credit for more wit than to poke your head into the lion's mouth here. But —admitting that—why not be graceful about it? Here am I, amiably treating you like an equal—you might at least be grateful enough for that to accept my invitation."

With a grunt the spy got upon his feet, while Lanyard stood back against the window and, grinning, made him free of the narrow path between the tree-tubs and the tables.

"After you, my *dear* Adolph!"

The German paused, half turned toward him, choking with rage, his suffused face darkly relieving the white scars he had won at Heidelberg. At this, with a graceless nod of unmistakable significance, Lanyard advanced the muzzle of his pocketed weapon. And with an ugly growl the German moved on and out through the break in the artificial hedge—Lanyard at his elbow, respectfully an inch or two behind.

"To your right," he requested pleasantly — "if it's all the same to you — I've business on the boulevards."

Ekstrom said nothing for the moment, but sullenly yielded to the suggestion.

"By the way," the adventurer presently pursued, "you might be good enough to inform me how you knew we *were* dining at Boivin's—eh?"

"If it interests you—" the spy began, but paused.

"I own it does—tremendously!"

"Pure accident. I happened to be sitting in the café and caught a glimpse of you through the door as you took the young woman up-stairs. Therefore I waited till your waiter called for your bill at the *caisse*, then stationed myself outside."

"But why? Can you tell me what you thought to accomplish?"

"You knew well," Ekstrom muttered. "After what happened in London—it's your life or mine!"

"Spoken like a true villain of melodrama! But it seems to me you overlooked a conspicuous chance to accomplish your hellish design back there in the side streets."

"Would I be such a fool as to shoot you down before finding out what you've done with those plans?"

"You might as well have," Lanyard informed him lightly. "For you won't know otherwise."

With an infuriated oath the German stopped short; but he dared not ignore the readiness with which his tormentor imitated the maneuver and kept the pistol trained through the fabric of his rain-coat.

"Yes?" Lanyard inquired with an exasperating accent of surprise.

"Understand me," Ekstrom muttered vindictively; "next time I'll show you no mercy—"

"But if there *is* no next time? We're not apt to meet again, you know."

"That's something beyond your knowledge—"

"You think so? But sha'n't we resume our stroll? People might see us standing here—you with your teeth bared like an ill-tempered dog. Oh, thank you!" And as they moved on, Lanyard continued: "Shall I explain why we're not apt to meet again?"

"If it amuses you, you may tell me why you *think* so."

"Thanks once more! For the simple reason that Paris satisfies me; so here I stop."

"Well?" the spy asked, with a blank, sidelong look.

"Whereas you, *mein herr,* leave Paris to-night."

"What makes you think that?"

"Because you value your thick hide too highly to remain, my dear captain."

Having gained the corner of the Boulevard St. Denis, Lanyard pulled up.

"One moment, by your leave. You see yonder the entrance to the Métro—don't you? And here, a dozen feet away, a perfectly able-bodied *sergent de ville?* Let this fateful conjunction impress you properly, for five minutes after you have descended to the Métro—or as soon as the noise of a train advises me you've had one chance to get away — I shall mention casually to the *sergo* that I have seen Captain Ek—"

"Hush!" the German protested in a hiss of fright.

"Certainly. I've no desire to embarrass you—publicity must be terribly distasteful to one of your reserved and sensitive nature, I know. But I trust you understand me? There's the Métro; on the other hand, there's the police; while here, you must admit, am I, as large as life—and very much on the job! And inasmuch as I shall certainly mention my suspicions to the minion of the law—as aforesaid—I'd advise you to be well out of Paris before dawn!"

There was murder in the eyes of the spy as he lingered, truculently lowering at the smiling countenance of the adventurer;

and for an instant Lanyard was well persuaded he'd gone too far, that even here, even at this busy junction of two crowded thoroughfares, Ekstrom would let his temper get the better of his judgment and risk everything in an attempt on the life of his despoiler.

But he was mistaken.

With a surly shrug the spy swung about and marched straight to the kiosk of the underground railway, into which, without one backward glance, he disappeared.

Two minutes later the earth quaked beneath Lanyard's feet with the crash and rumble of a north-bound train.

He waited three minutes longer; but Ekstrom didn't reappear; and at length, convinced that his warning had proved effectual, Lanyard turned and made off.

CHAPTER XVI

OFF WITH THE OLD

For all the success that had ostensibly rewarded his effrontery, Lanyard's mind was far from easy during that hour which he devoted to dodging, ducking, and doubling across Paris and back again before attempting to rejoin Lucy Shannon. He hoped to confuse and confound any jackals of the Pack that might have picked up his trail as adventitiously as Ekstrom had.

His delight, indeed, in discountenancing his dupe and enemy was quite chilled by an apprehension that it were madness, simply because the spy had proved unexpectedly tractable, to consider the Ekstrom affair closed. In the very fact of that docility inhered something strange and ominous, contemplation of which distilled a potent premonition of evil hardly mitigated by Lanyard's relief on finding the girl awaiting him, as per program, safe and sound under the wing of *madame la concierge*, in the little court of private stables wherein he rented space for his car, off the Rue des Acacias.

Monsieur le concierge, it appeared, was from home, and *madame*, thick-witted, warm-hearted, simple body that she was, discovered a phase of beaming incuriosity most grateful to the adventurer, enabling him as it did to dispense with more embarrassing mendacity in support of his original lie as to their relations and to whisk the girl away as soon as he liked.

This last was just as speedily as personal examination had reassured him with respect to his automobile—superficially an ordinary motor-cab of the better grade, but with an exceptionally powerful engine hidden beneath its hood. A car of such a character, passing readily as the town car of any family in modest circumstances, or else as what Paris calls a *voiture de remise* —a hackney car without taximeter—was a tremendous convenience, enabling its proprietor to scurry at will about cab-ridden Paris without exciting comment; but it couldn't be left standing in public places at odd hours, or for long, without attracting the interest of the police, and so was useless to Lanyard at present. But he entertained a shrewd suspicion that his plans might all miscarry and the command of a fast-traveling car ere long become a necessity to his salvation, so he cheerfully devoted a fair half-hour to putting the motor in prime trim for the road.

With this accomplished — and the fact established through discreet, oblique interrogation of *madame la concierge* that conditions in that quarter were normal; that no inquiries had been made after the whereabouts of Pierre Lamier, and no strange or otherwise questionable characters had been seen loitering in the neighborhood of late—he was ready for his first true step toward rehabilitation.

Thus it was past one in the morning when, with the girl on his arm, he issued forth into the dark and drowsy Rue des Acacias, moving swiftly, crossed the Avenue de la Grande Armée, and thereafter avoiding main-traveled highways, struck southward through tangled side streets to the aristocratic quarter of Passy.

Here, skirting the boulevards of the fortifications, they approached the private park of La Muette.

The home of that wealthy and amiable eccentric, Mme. Hélène Omber, was a souvenir of those days when Passy had been suburban. A survival of the revolution, a vast, dour pile that had known few changes since the days of its construction, it occupied a large, unkempt park, irregularly triangular in shape, bounded by two streets and an avenue, and rendered private by high walls crowned with broken glass. Carriage-gates opened on the avenue, guarded by a porter's lodge, while of the three posterns that pierced the walls on the side streets one only was in general use by the servants of the establishment; the other two were presumed to be permanently sealed.

Lanyard, however, knew better.

When they had turned off from the avenue he slackened pace and moved at caution, examining the prospect narrowly.

On the one hand he had the wall of the private park, topped by naked, soughing limbs of neglected trees. On the other, across the way, a block of tall old buildings, withdrawn behind jealous garden walls, showing—at that hour at least—stupid, sleepy faces and lightless eyes to passers-by.

Within the perspective of the street but three shapes stirred—Lanyard and the girl in the shadow of the wall, and a disconsolate, misprized cat that promptly on their appearance vanished like a terror-stricken ghost.

Overhead the sky was breaking, showing ebon patches and infrequent stars through a wind-harried wrack of cloud. The night had grown sensibly colder and noisy with the rushing sweep of a new-sprung wind.

Several yards from the postern-gate Lanyard paused definitely and spoke for the first time in many minutes, for the knowledge of their errand's gravity had oppressed the spirits of both and enjoined an unnatural silence ever since their departure from the Rue des Acacias.

"This is where we stop," he said, with a jerk of his head toward the wall; "but—it's not too late—"

"For what?" the girl asked quickly.

"I promised you no danger; but now that I've thought it over, I can't be certain of that—there's always danger. And I'm afraid for you. It's not yet too late for you to turn back and await me in a safer place."

"You asked me to accompany you for a special purpose, I believe," she said; "you begged me to come with you, in fact. Now I have agreed, and come this far, I don't mean to turn back without good reason."

"You—you really care that much?" he faltered, staring.

"We're wasting time," she returned steadily.

His gesture indicated uneasy acquiescence. "I should never have asked this of you. I think I must have been a little mad. If anything should come of it to injure you—"

"If you mean to do what you promised—"

"Do you doubt my sincerity?"

"It was your own suggestion that you leave me no excuse for doubt."

Without further remonstrance, if with a mind beset with misgivings, he led on to the gate, a blank door of wood, painted a dark green, deeply recessed in the thickness of the wall.

In support of his promise that he had made every preparation to attack the premises before the sudden departure of Mme. Omber for England, Lanyard had a key ready and in the lock almost before they reached it. And the door swung back easily and noiselessly, as though on well-greased hinges. As silently it shut them in.

Beyond the fact that they stood upon a weed-grown gravel path, hedged about with thick masses of shrubbery, the girl was unable to make much of the general aspect of their surroundings. The park was as black as a pocket, and the heavy effluvia of wet mold, decaying weeds, and rotting leaves that choked the air seemed only to render the murk still thicker.

But Lanyard evidently knew his way blindfold; though motives of prudence bade him refrain from using his flash-lamp, there wasn't the least uncertainty in his actions. Never once at loss for the right turning, he piloted the girl swiftly through a bewildering black labyrinth of paths and lawns and thickets.

In due course he pulled up, and she saw that they had come out into a clear space of lawn and stood close beside the featureless, looming bulk of a lightless building.

His grasp tightened, admonitory, upon her fingers, and she caught his curiously penetrating yet guarded whisper:

"This is the back of the house—the service entrance. From this door a broad path runs straight to the main service gateway; you can't mistake it; and the gate itself has a spring-lock, easy enough to open from the inside. Remember this in event of trouble. We might become separated in the darkness and confusion."

Gently returning the pressure, "I understand," she said in a whisper.

Immediately he drew her on to the house, pausing but momentarily before a wide doorway, one-half of which promptly swung open and, as soon as they had passed through, closed with no perceptible jar or click. And then Lanyard's flash-lamp was lancing the gloom on every hand, swiftly raking the bounds of a large, paneled servants' hall, until it picked out the foot of a flight of steps at the farther end. To this they moved stealthily over a tiled flooring.

The ascent of the staircase was accomplished, however, only with infinite care, Lanyard testing each rise before trusting it with his weight or the girl's. Twice he bade her skip one step lest the ancient woodwork betray them with its complaints. In spite of all this, no less than three hideous squeals of protest were evoked before they gained the top, each indicating a pause and a wait of several breathless seconds.

But it would seem that such servants as had been left in the house, in the absence of its *châtelaine,* either slept soundly or were accustomed to discount the midnight concert of those age-old timbers; and without mischance, at length, through a swinging door they entered the main reception-hall, revealed by the dancing spotlight as a room of noble proportions and furnished with somber magnificence.

Here the girl was left alone for a few minutes, while Lanyard darted abovestairs for rapid reconnaissance of the state bedchambers and servants' quarters.

With a sensation of being crushed and suffocated by the encompassing dark mystery, she nerved herself against a protracted vigil. The obscurity on every hand seemed alive with stealthy footsteps, whisperings, murmurings, the passage of shrouded shapes of silence and of menace. Her eyes ached, her throat and temples throbbed, her skin crept, her scalp tingled. She seemed to hear a thousand different noises of alarm.

The only sounds she did not seem to hear were those — if any — that accompanied Lanyard's departure and return. Had he not been thoughtful enough, when a few feet distant, to give warning with the light she might well have greeted with a cry of fright the consciousness of a presence near her, so silently he moved about. As it was, she was startled, apprehensive of some misadventure, to find him back so soon, for he hadn't been gone three minutes, long though her nervousness had made that period seem.

"It's quite all right," he announced in hushed accents — no longer whispering. "There are just five people in the house aside from ourselves—all servants, asleep in the rear wing. We've a clear field—if no excuse for taking foolish chances! However, we'll be finished and off again within ten minutes. This way."

Their destination proved to be a huge and gloomy library at one extreme of a chain of magnificent salons that formed a veritable treasure-gallery of exquisite furnishings and authentic old masters. As they moved slowly through these chambers Lanyard kept his flash-lamp busy; involuntarily, now and again, he would check the girl before some splendid canvas or extraordinary antique.

"I've always meant to happen in some day with a moving-van and loot this place properly!" he confessed with a little sigh. "Considered from the view-point of an expert practitioner in my—ah—late profession, it's a sin and a shame to let all this go neglected when it's so ill-guarded. The old lady—Mme. Omber, you know—has all the money there is, approximately, and when she dies all these beautiful things go to the Louvre, for she's without kith or kin."

"But how did she manage to accumulate them all?" the girl wondered.

"It's the accretion of generations of passionate collectors," he informed her. "The late M. Omber was the last of his dynasty; he and his forebears brought together the paintings and the furniture; *madame* added the Orientals gathered by her first husband and her own collection of antique jewelry and precious stones. That's *her* particular fad. Here we are!"

As he spoke the light of the flash-lamp was blotted out. An instant later the girl heard a little clashing noise of curtain-rings sliding along a pole, and this was thrice repeated. Then, following another brief pause, a switch clicked, and, streaming from the hood of a portable electric desk-lamp, a pool of light flooded the heart of a vast place of shadows.

Reviewing it swiftly, the girl found herself in an apartment whose doors and windows alike were cloaked with heavy draperies hanging from floor to ceiling in long, shining folds. Immense black bookcases lined the walls, their shelves crowded with volumes in rich bindings; from their tops pallid, sculptured masks peered down inquisitively, leering and scowling at the intruders.

AND NOW HIS TASK WAS NEARLY FINISHED. SWIFTLY AND WITH ASSURED MOVEMENTS HE THREW THE KNOB

A huge mantelpiece of carved marble, supporting a great, dark mirror, occupied the best of one wall; beneath it a wide, deep fireplace yawned, insufficiently shielded by a screen of wrought brass and crystal. In the middle of the room stood a library-table of mahogany; huge leather chairs and couches encumbered the remainder of its space. And one corner, that to the right of the fireplace, was shut off by a high Japanese screen of cinnabar and gold.

To this Lanyard moved confidently, carrying the lamp. Placing it on the floor, he grasped one wing of the screen with both hands, and at cost of considerable effort swung it aside, uncovering the face of a huge, old-style safe, of which the body was buried in the wall.

For several seconds—but not for many—Lanyard studied this problem intently, standing quite motionless, head lowered and thrust forward, hands resting on his hips. Then, turning, he nodded an invitation to come nearer.

" My last job," he said, with a smiling countenance oddly lighted by the lamp at his feet—" and my easiest, I fancy. Sorry, too, for I'd rather have liked to show off a bit! But this old-fashioned tin-bank gives no excuse for spectacular methods!"

" But," the girl objected, " you've brought no tools!"

" Oh, but I have!" And fumbling in a pocket, Lanyard produced a pencil. " Behold!" he laughed, brandishing it.

She knitted thoughtful brows. " I don't understand."

" All I need—except this."

Crossing to the desk, he found a sheet of note-paper and, folding it, returned.

" Now," he said, " give me five minutes."

Kneeling, he gave the combination-knob a smart preliminary twirl, then rested a shoulder against the sheet of painted iron, his cheek to its smooth, cold cheek, his ear close beside the dial, and with the practised fingers of a master locksmith and an authority on strong-box construction, began to manipulate the knob.

Gently, tirelessly, to and fro he twisted, turned, raced, and checked the combination, caressing it, humoring it, wheedling it, inexorably questioning it in the dumb language his fingers spoke so deftly. And in his ear the click and whir and thump of shifting wards and tumblers murmured articulate response in the terms of their cryptic code.

Now and again, releasing the knob and sitting back on his heels, he would bend grave scrutiny to the dial, note the position of the combination, and with his pencil jot memoranda on the folded sheet of paper. This happened perhaps a dozen times, spaced by intervals of irregular duration.

He worked diligently, in a phase of concentration that apparently excluded from his consciousness the near proximity of the girl, who stood—or rather stooped, half kneeling—less than a pace from his shoulder, watching the process with interest hardly less keen than his own.

Yet when one faint, odd sound broke the slumberous silence of the salon, instantly he swung around and stood erect in a single movement, gaze to the curtains.

But it had only been a premonitory rumble in the inwards of a tall old clock, about to strike, in the reception-hall. And as its sonorous chimes heralded two deep-toned strokes Lanyard laughed quietly, intimately, into the girl's startled eyes and sank back before the safe.

And now his task was nearly finished. Within another minute he sat back with face aglow, uttered a hushed exclamation of satisfaction, studied his memoranda for a space, then swiftly and with assured movements threw the knob and dial into the several varying positions of the combination, grasped the lever-handle, turned it smartly, and swung the door wide open.

" Simple, eh?" he chuckled, with a glance aside at the girl's eager face, bewitchingly flushed and shadowed by the lamp's upthrown glow—" when one knows the trick, of course! And now—if one were not an honest man—a fortune's ours for the taking!"

A wave of his hand indicated the rack of pigeonholes with which the cavity of the safe was fitted — wide spaces and deep, stored tight with an extraordinary array of leather jewel-cases, packets of stout paper bound with tape and sealed, and boxes of wood and pasteboard of every shape and size.

" They were only her finest pieces, her personal jewels, that Mme. Omber took with her to England," he explained; " she's mad about them — never separated from them. Perhaps the finest collection of priceless stones in the world for size and purity of water. She had the heart to leave these—all this!"

Lifting a hand, he chose at random, dislodged two leather cases, placed them on the floor, and with a blade of his penknife forced their fastenings.

From the first the light smote radiance in blinding, coruscant welter; here was nothing but diamond jewelry, mostly in antique settings.

He took up a piece and offered it to the girl. She drew back her hand involuntarily.

"No!" she protested in a whisper that sounded like one of fright.

"But just look!" he urged. "There's no danger—and you'll never see the like of this again!"

Still she stubbornly withheld her hand. "No, no!" she pleaded. "I—I'd rather not touch it. Put it back. Let's hurry. I—I'm frightened."

He shrugged and, acquiescent, replaced the jewel; then yielded again to impulse of curiosity and lifted the lid of the second case.

It contained nothing but pieces set with colored stones of the first order—emeralds, amethysts, sapphires, rubies, topaz, garnets, lapis-lazuli, jacinths, jades—fashioned by master craftsmen into rings, bracelets, chains, brooches, lockets, necklaces of exquisite design—the whole thrown heedlessly together, without care or arrangement.

For a moment the adventurer stared down moodily at this priceless hoard, his eyes narrowing, his breathing perceptibly quickened. Then, with a slow gesture, he reclosed the case, took from his pocket that other case which he had brought from London, opened it, and held it aside, beneath the light, for the girl's inspection.

He looked not once either at its contents or at her, fearing lest his countenance betray the truth, that he had not yet succeeded completely in exorcizing that mutinous spirit, the Lone Wolf, from the tenement over which it had so long held sway; and content with the sound of her quick, startled sigh of amaze, that what she now beheld could so marvelously outshine what had been disclosed in the other boxes, he withdrew his hand, shut the case, found place for it in the safe, and without pause closed the door, shot the bolts, and twirled the dial until the tumblers fairly sang.

One final twist of the lever-handle convincing him that the combination was effectively dislocated, he rose, picked up the lamp, replaced it on the desk with scrupulous care to leave no sign that it had been moved, and looked round to the girl.

She was where he had left her, a small, tense, vibrant figure among the shadows, her eyes dark pools of wonder in a face of blazing pallor.

With a high head and his shoulders well back he made a gesture signifying more eloquently than any words: *"All that is ended!"*

As though thereby released from chains of some strange enchantment, she started and came swiftly toward him.

"And now—" she asked breathlessly.

"Now to make our getaway," he replied with assumed lightness. "Before dawn we must be clear of Paris. Two minutes, while I straighten this place up and leave it as I found it."

He moved back to the safe, restored the wing of the screen to the spot from which he had moved it and, after an instant's close scrutiny of the rug, began to explore his pockets.

"What are you looking for?" the girl inquired, coming over to him again.

"My memoranda of the combination—"

"I have it." She indicated its hiding-place in a pocket of her coat. "You left it on the floor, and I was afraid you might forget—"

"No fear!" he laughed. "No"—as she offered him the folded paper—"keep it and destroy it once we're out of this. Now those portières."

Extinguishing the desk-light, he turned attention to the draperies at doors and windows.

Within five minutes, leaving everything as they had found it, the two were once more in the silent streets of Passy.

They had to walk as far as the Place de Trocadéro before Lanyard found a cab, which he later dismissed at the corner of the Faubourg St. Germain.

Another brief walk brought them to a gate in the garden wall of a residence situated at the junction of two quiet streets.

"This, I think, ends our Parisian wanderings," Lanyard announced. "If you'll be good enough to keep an eye for busybodies—and yourself as inconspicuous as possible in the recess of this doorway."

And he walked back to the curb, measuring the wall with his eye.

"What are you going to do?"

He responded by doing it so swiftly that she gasped with surprise; pausing momentarily within a yard of the walk, he gathered himself together, shot up lithely into the air, caught the top curbing with both hands, and— She heard the soft thud of his feet on the earth of the enclosure, and the latch grated behind her as the door opened.

"For the last time," Lanyard laughed quietly from the aperture, "permit me to invite you to break the law by committing an act of trespass!"

Securing the door, he led her to a garden bench secluded amid conventional shrubbery.

"If you'll wait here," he suggested—"well, it will be best. I'll be back as soon as possible, though I may be detained some time. Still, inasmuch as I'm about to break into this house, my motives, which are most commendable, may be misinterpreted, and I'd rather you waited here, with the street at hand. If you hear a noise like trouble you've only to unlatch the gate. But let's trust that my purely benevolent intentions toward the French republic won't be misconstrued!"

"I'll wait," she assured him bravely; "but won't you tell me—"

With a hand he indicated the mansion towering above them.

"I'm going to break in there to pay an early morning call and impart some interesting information to a person of considerable consequence—nobody less, in fact, than M. Ducroy."

"And who is he?"

"The present minister of war. We haven't as yet the pleasure of each other's acquaintance; still I think he won't be sorry to see me. In brief, I mean to make him a present of the Huysman plans and bargain for safe conduct for us both from France."

Impulsively she offered her hand and, when he somewhat diffidently took it, she gave his fingers a firm, compelling pressure with her own.

"Be careful!" she whispered brokenly, her pale, sweet face upturned to his. "Oh, do be careful! I am afraid for you."

And for a moment the temptation to take her in his arms seemed stronger than any he had ever known.

But reminding himself that he had voluntarily stipulated for a year's probation, he released her hand with an incoherent mumble, turned, and hastily disappeared in the direction of the house.

CHAPTER XVII

ELATION AND DESPAIR

Established behind his splendid mahogany desk in his office at the ministry of war, or moving majestically abroad attired in frock coat and shining topper, or lending the dignity of his presence to some formal function of state in that beautiful uniform which appertained unto his office, M. Hector Ducroy cut an imposing figure.

Abed—it was sadly otherwise.

Lanyard switched on the bedside light, turning it so that it struck full upon the face of the sleeper, and as he sat down he smiled.

The minister of war lay upon his back, his distinguished corpulence severely dislocating the chaste simplicity of the bedclothing. Athwart his shelving chest fat hands were peacefully folded in a gesture affectingly naive. His face was red, a noble high-light shone upon the promontory of his bald pate, his mouth was open.

To the best of his unconscious ability he was giving a protracted imitation of a dog-fight; and he was really exhibiting sublime virtuosity — one readily distinguished individual howls, growls, yelps against an undertone made up of the blended voices of excited non-combatants.

As suddenly as though some one, wearying of the entertainment, had lifted the needle from that record, it was discontinued. The minister of war stirred uneasily in his sleep, muttered a naughty word, opened one eye, scowled, opened the other.

He blinked furiously, half-blinded but still able to make out the discomposing silhouette of a man seated just beyond the radius of glare — a quiet presence that moved not, but eyed him steadfastly; an apparition the more arresting because of its very immobility.

Rapidly the face of the minister of war lost several shades of purple. He moistened his lips nervously with a thick, dry tongue, and convulsively he clutched the bedclothing high and tight about his neck, as though laboring under the erroneous impression that the sanctity of his person was threatened.

"What do you want, *monsieur?*" he

stuttered in a still, small voice which he would have been the last to acknowledge his own.

"I desire to discuss a matter of business with *monsieur*," replied the intruder after a small pause. "If you will be good enough to calm yourself—"

"I am perfectly calm—"

But here the minister of war verified with one swift glance an earlier impression, to the effect that the trespasser was holding something that shone with a metallic luster, and his soul began to curl up round the edges.

"There are eighteen hundred francs in my pocketbook — about," he managed to articulate. "My watch is on the stand here. You will find the family plate in the dining-room safe, behind the buffet—the key is on my ring — and the jewels of *madame*, my wife, in a small strong-box beneath the head of her bed. The combination—"

"Pardon; *monsieur* labors under a misapprehension," the housebreaker interposed dryly. "Had one desired these valuables, one would readily have possessed oneself of them without going to the trouble of disturbing the rest of *monsieur*. I have, however, already mentioned the nature of my errand."

"Eh?" demanded the minister of war. "What is that? But give me of your mercy one chance to explain! I have never wittingly harmed you, *monsieur*, and if I have done so without my knowledge, rest assured you have but to petition me through the proper channels and I will be only too glad to make amends!"

"*Still* you do not listen!" the other insisted. "Come, M. Ducroy—calm yourself. I have not robbed you, because I have no wish to rob you. I have not harmed you, for I have no wish to harm you. Nor have I any wish other than to lay before you, as representing government, a certain matter of state business."

There was silence while the minister of war permitted this exhortation to sink in. Then, apparently reassured, he sat up in bed and eyed his untimely visitor with a glare little short of truculent.

"Eh? What's that?" he demanded. "Business? What sort of business? If you wish to lay under my consideration any matter of business, how is it you break into my home at dead of night and rouse me in this brutal fashion—er—" here his voice faltered — "with a lethal weapon pointed at my head?"

"*Monsieur* will admit he speaks under an error," returned the burglar. "I have yet to point this pistol at him. I should be very sorry to feel obliged to do so. I display it, in fact, simply that *monsieur* may not forget himself and attempt to summon servants in his resentment of this —I admit—unusual method of introducing oneself to his attention. When we understand each other there will be no need for such precautions, and then I shall put my pistol away, so that the sight of it may no longer annoy *monsieur*."

"It is true, I do not understand you," grumbled the minister of war. "Why—if your errand be peaceable—break into my house?"

"Because it was urgently necessary to see *monsieur* instantly. *Monsieur* will reflect upon the reception one would receive did one ring the front door-bell and demand an audience at three o'clock in the morning!"

"Well—" M. Ducroy conceded dubiously. Then, on reflection, he iterated the monosyllable testily: "Well! What is it you want, then?"

"I can best explain by asking *monsieur* to examine—what I have to show him."

With this Lanyard dropped the pistol into his coat-pocket, from another produced a gold cigarette-case, and from the store of this last selected a single cigarette with meticulous care.

Regarding the minister of war in a mystifying manner, he began to roll the cigarette briskly between his palms. A small shower of tobacco sifted to the floor; the rice-paper cracked and came away; and with the bland smile and gesture of a professional conjuror, Lanyard exhibited a small cylinder of stiff paper between his thumb and index-finger.

Goggling resentfully, M. Ducroy spluttered:

"Eh—what impudence is this?"

His smile unchanged, Lanyard bent forward and silently dropped the cylinder into the Frenchman's hand. At the same time he offered him a pocket magnifying-glass.

"What is this?" Ducroy persisted stupidly. "What—what—"

"If *monsieur* will be good enough to unroll the papers and examine them with the aid of this glass—"

With a wondering grunt M. Ducroy complied, smoothing out several small sheets of photographer's printing-out paper, to which extraordinarily complicated and minute designs had been transferred — strongly resembling laborious efforts to conventionalize a spider's web.

But no sooner had M. Ducroy focused upon them the magnifying-glass than he started violently, uttered an excited exclamation, and subjected the papers to an examination both prolonged and exacting.

"*Monsieur* is no doubt now satisfied?" Lanyard inquired, when his patience would endure no longer.

"These are genuine?" the minister of war demanded sharply, without looking up.

"*Monsieur* can readily discern notations made upon the drawings by the inventor, Georges Huysman, in his own hand. Furthermore, each plan has been marked in the lower left-hand corner with the word '*accepted,*' followed by the initials of the German minister of war. I think this establishes beyond dispute the authenticity of these photographs of the plans for Huysman's invention."

"Yes," the other agreed breathlessly. "You have the negatives from which these prints were made?"

"Here," Lanyard said, indicating a second cigarette.

And then, with a movement so leisurely and careless that his purpose was accomplished before the other in his preoccupation was aware of it, the adventurer leaned forward and swept up the prints from the counterpane in front of M. Ducroy.

"Here!" the Frenchman exclaimed. "Why do you do that?"

"*Monsieur* no longer questions their authenticity?"

"I grant you that."

"Then I return to myself these prints, pending negotiations for their transfer to France."

"How did you come by them?" demanded M. Ducroy, after a moment's thought.

"Need *monsieur* ask? Is France so ill-served by her spies that you do not already know of the misfortune recently suffered in London by one Captain Ekstrom?"

Ducroy shook his head. Lanyard received this indication with impatience. It seemed hardly possible that the French minister of war could be either so stupid or so ignorant. But with a patient shrug he proceeded to elucidate.

"Captain Ekstrom," he explained, "but recently succeeded in photographing these plans and took them to London to sell to the English. Unfortunately for himself—unhappily for perfidious Albion!—Captain Ekstrom fell in with me and mistook me for Downing Street's representative. And here are the plans."

"You are—the Lone Wolf—then?"

"I am, *monsieur* — simply as concerns you, the person in possession of these plans, and who offers them through you, to France, for a price."

"But why introduce yourself to me in this extraordinary fashion to consummate a transaction for which the ordinary channels with which you must be familiar are entirely adequate?"

"Simply because Ekstrom has followed me to Paris," Lanyard explained indulgently. "Did I venture to approach you through the customary channels, my chances of rounding out a useful life thereafter would be practically nil. Furthermore, my circumstances are such that it has become necessary for me to leave France immediately—without an hour's delay—also secretly; else I might as well remain here to be butchered. Now you command the only means I know of to accomplish my purpose. And that is the price, the only price, you will have to pay me for these plans."

"I don't understand you."

"It is on schedule, is it not, that Captain Vauquelin, of the aviation corps, is to attempt a non-stop flight from Paris to London this morning, with two passengers, in a new Parrott biplane?"

"That is so. Well?"

"I must be one of those passengers; and I have a companion, a young lady, who will take the place of the other."

"It isn't possible, *monsieur*. Those arrangements are already fixed."

"You will countermand them."

"But there is no time—"

"You can get into telephonic communication with Port Aviation in two minutes."

"But the passengers have already been promised—"

"You will disappoint them."

"The start is to be made in the first flush of daylight. How could you reach Port Aviation in time?"

"In your motor-car, *monsieur*."

"It cannot be done."

"It must! If the start must be delayed until we arrive, you will give orders that it shall be so delayed."

For a minute the minister of war hesitated; then he shook his head definitely.

"The difficulties are insuperable—"

"There is no such thing, *monsieur*."

"I am sorry; it can't be done."

"That is your answer?"

"It is regrettable, *monsieur*."

"Very well!" Lanyard bent forward again, took a match from the stand on the bedside table, and struck it. Very calmly he advanced the flame toward the cigarette containing the roll of inflammable films.

"*Monsieur!*" Ducroy cried in horror. "What are you doing?"

Lanyard favored him with a look of surprise.

"I am about to destroy these films and prints."

"You must never do that!"

"Why not? They are mine, to do with as I like. If I cannot dispose of them at my price, I shall destroy them!"

"But—my God!—what you demand is impossible! Stay, *monsieur!* Think what your action means to France!"

"I have already thought of that. Now I must think of myself."

"But—one moment!"

Ducroy sat up in bed and dangled fat legs over the side.

"But one moment only, *monsieur*. Don't make me waste your matches!"

"*Monsieur*, it shall be as you desire, if it lies in my power to accomplish it."

With this the minister of war stood up and made for the telephone, in his agitation heedless of dressing-gown and slippers.

"You *must* accomplish it, M. Ducroy," Lanyard advised him gravely, puffing out the flame; "for if you fail, you make yourself the instrument of my death. Here are the plans."

"You trust them to me?" Ducroy asked in astonishment.

"But naturally—that makes it an affair of your honor," Lanyard explained suavely.

With a gesture of graceful capitulation the Frenchman accepted the little roll of films.

"Permit me," he said, "to acknowledge the honor of *monsieur's* confidence!"

Lanyard bowed low and gravely. "One knows with whom one deals, *monsieur!* And now! if you will be good enough to excuse me."

He turned to the door.

"But—eh—where are you going?"

"*Mademoiselle*," Lanyard said, pausing on the threshold—"that is, the young lady who will accompany us—is waiting anxiously in the garden out yonder. I go to find and reassure her and—with *monsieur's* permission—to bring her into the library, where we will await *monsieur* when he has finished telephoning and—ah—repaired the deficiencies in his attire, which one trusts he will forgive one's mentioning!"

He bowed again, impudently, gaily, and—when the minister of war looked up again sheepishly from contemplation of his naked shanks—had vanished.

In high feather Lanyard was making his way down to a door at the rear of the house which gave upon the garden—in his new social status of governmental protégé disdaining any such a commonplace avenue as that conservatory window whose fastenings he had forced on entering. And, boldly unbolting the door, he ran out into the night to rejoin his beloved, like a new man waking to new life.

But she was no more there—the bench was vacant, the garden deserted, the gateway yawning to the street.

With the low, curt cry of one staggered by a brutal blow from a trusted hand, Lanyard turned from the bench and stumbled out of the garden and to the junction with the cross-street. But nowhere in the compass of their perspectives could he see anything that moved.

After some time he returned to the garden and quartered it with the thoroughness of a pointer beating a covert. But he did this hopelessly, bitterly aware that the outcome would be precisely what it eventually was—that is to say, nothing.

He was kneeling beside the bench—scrutinizing the turf roundabout with microscopic attention by aid of his flash-lamp, seeking some sign of struggle to prove she had not left him willingly; and finding none—when a voice brought him momentarily out of his distraction.

He looked up wildly, to discover Ducroy standing over him, his stout person chastely swathed in a quilted dressing-gown with trousers, his expression one of stupefaction.

"Well, *monsieur*—well?" the minister of war demanded irritably. "What—I repeat—are you doing there?"

Lanyard essayed response, choked up, and gulped. He rose and stood swaying, showing a stricken face, but for the moment couldn't speak.

"Eh?" Ducroy insisted, with an accent of exasperation. "Why do you stand glaring at me like that — eh? Come, *monsieur;* what ails you? I have arranged everything, I say. Where is *mademoiselle?* "

Lanyard made a broken gesture.

"She is gone," he muttered forlornly.

Instantly the countenance of the stout Frenchman was lightened with a gleam of eager interest—romance lover that he was —and he stepped nearer, peering closely into the face of the adventurer.

"Gone?" he echoed. "*Mademoiselle?* Your sweetheart, eh?"

Lanyard assented with a disconsolate nod and sigh. Impatiently Ducroy caught him by the sleeve.

"Come!" he insisted, tugging—"come at once into the house. Now, *monsieur*—now at length you enlist all one's sympathies! Come, I say! Is it your desire that I catch my death of cold?"

Indifferently Lanyard suffered himself to be led away. He was, indeed, barely conscious of what was happening. All his being was possessed by the thought that she had forsaken him.

And he could well guess why: impossible for such a one as she to contemplate, without a shudder, association with the man who had been what he had been! Infatuate! — to have dreamed that she would tolerate the devotion of a criminal, that she could ever forget his identity with the Lone Wolf. Inevitably—soon or late —she must have fled that ignominious thought, daring whatever consequences to escape and forget both it and him. And better now, perhaps, than later.

He moved mechanically, with a mind drowned in misery.

Before she had come into his life oftentimes he had felt lonely; but never had he known such loneliness as now invaded his rejected heart.

CHAPTER XVIII

ENIGMA

LANYARD had found no reason to believe that Lucy had left him otherwise than voluntarily, or that their adventures at the homes of Mme. Omber and M. Ducroy had been noted by spies of the Pack. The testimony of his own wits assured him that they hadn't been followed at any time subsequent to leaving the Rue des Acacias; their way had been too long and purposely too involved, and his vigilance too lively for that.

And (he told himself) he had every reason to believe she hadn't left him to go back to Bannon, concerning whom she had expressed her sentiments too forcibly to excuse a surmise that she had sought his protection again in preference to the Lone Wolf's.

Reasoning from this, he told himself he couldn't blame her. He could readily see how, permitting herself at first to be blinded by a certain romantic glamour in the situation, she had arrived suddenly at a clear perception of the fact that she was casting her lot with a common criminal. Left to herself there in the garden for a quarter-hour, she had been free to think independently for almost the first time since she had descended from the studio.

Then, horror overmastering her, she had fled the garden—wildly, blindly, he didn't doubt—and probably had sought refuge in some obscure hotel till morning. What then? She had neither money nor any friends in Paris, but had mentioned some personal jewelry she planned to pawn.

That would be her first move, then, to a pawnbroker's, where he must seek her—not to force himself again upon her, but to follow at a distance and watch over her, to ward off any attempt on Bannon's part to interfere.

The government pawn-shop had its attraction for Lanyard as well; he was there before the doors were open for the day—was the first to enter; and fortified by loans negotiated on his watch, cigarette-case, and a ring or two, retired to a near-by café which commanded a view of the entrance to the establishment on the Rue des Blancs-Manteaux and settled himself against a day-long vigil.

It wasn't easy; drowsiness buzzed in his brain and weighted his eyelids; now and again, involuntarily, he nodded over his glass of black coffee. And when evening came and the doors of the pawn-shop were closed for the night he rose and stumbled off, telling himself that possibly he had napped a little without his knowledge and thus had missed her visit.

Engaging obscure lodgings close by the Rue des Acacias, he slept till nearly noon of the following day, then rose to put into execution a design which had sprung full-winged from his brain at the moment of awakening.

He had his car and a chauffeur's license of long standing in the name of Pierre Lamier—was free, in short, to cruise at will the streets of Paris without lawful let or hindrance. And with the aid of a few judicious selections from the stock of a second-hand clothing-shop and of a few other purchases at a chemist's, he felt tolerably sure that it would need keen eyes—whether the Pack's or the *préfecture's* — to identify Pierre Lamier with either Michael Lanyard or the Lone Wolf.

His face and ears and neck he stained a weather-beaten brown, a discreet application of rouge along his cheek-bones enhancing the effect of persistent exposure to the winter winds and rains of Paris. He gave his hands an even darker shade, adding verisimilitude by inking his finger-nails into permanent mourning. Further, he refrained from shaving—a stubble of two days' neglect bristled upon his chin and jowls. A rusty brown ulster, with cap to match, shoddy trousers boasting conspicuous stripes of leaden color, and patched boots completed the transformation.

Monsieur and *madame* of the *conciergerie* he deceived with a yarn of selling his all to purchase the motor-car and embark in business for himself in anticipation of his coming marriage; and with their blessing he sallied forth to scour the city diligently for sight or sign of the woman to whom his every heart-beat was now dedicated.

By the close of the third day he reluctantly conceded that she must have managed to escape from Paris without his aid.

Then he began to suspect that Bannon had fled Paris as well, for the most diligent investigation he was able to pursue unchallenged failed to unearth the least clue to the movements of the American subsequent to the fire at Troyon's.

As for Troyon's, it was now only a gaping excavation choked with ashes and charred timbers; and though there were still rumors of police interest in the origin of the fire, nothing he heard or read in the papers seemed to connect Michael Lanyard's name with their activities. His disappearance and Lucy Shannon's seemed to have been accepted as due to death in the holocaust; and the fact that their bodies hadn't been recovered was no longer commented upon.

Already Paris had lost interest in the affair.

Even so, it seemed, had the Pack lost interest in the Lone Wolf; or else his disguise was impenetrable. Twice he saw De Morbihan disporting himself on the boulevards, and once he passed close by Popinot; but neither noticed him.

Now, toward midnight of that same third day, Lanyard was driving slowly westward on the Boulevard de la Madeleine when a limousine of familiar aspect rounded a corner half a block ahead and, drawing up in front of Viel's, discharged four passengers.

The first was Wertheimer, and at sight of his rather striking figure, arrayed for the evening in apparel from Bond Street, Lanyard slackened speed.

Turning as he alighted, the Englishman offered his hand to a young woman. She jumped down to the sidewalk in radiant attire and temper, laughing like a delighted child.

Involuntarily Lanyard stopped his car, and a chauffeur driving immediately to the rear, swerving out to escape collision, shot past, cursing him liberally, while a *sergent de ville* scowled darkly and uttered an imperative word.

Lanyard pulled himself together somehow and drove on.

The girl was just then passing into the restaurant through the revolving door, Wertheimer attending her, while De Morbihan had alighted from the car and was lending a solicitous arm to Bannon.

But to these last Lanyard paid little attention. Quite automatically he passed Viel's, rounded the Madeleine, and turned up the Boulevard Malesherbes. Paris and all its brisk midnight traffic swung by without claiming a tithe of his attention—he was mainly conscious of lights that reeled dizzily round him, like a multitude of staring, malicious, mocking eyes.

At the junction with the Boulevard Haussmann a second *sergent de ville* roused him with a warning about careless driving. He went more sanely thereafter, but with a heart of utter wretchedness—his eyes still wore a dazed expression, and now and again he shook his head impatiently, as though to rid it of a swarm of tormenting thoughts.

So it seemed he had all along been her dupe; that all the while he had been ostentatiously shielding her from harm and diffidently showing her every evidence of his devotion she had been laughing in her sleeve and planning to return with her report of a fool self-hoodwinked to the service she had pretended to despise.

A great anger welled in his bosom.

Turning round, he made back to the Boulevard de la Madeleine, and on one pretext and another contrived to haunt the neighborhood of Viel's until the party came out, something after one o'clock.

It was evident they had supped merrily; the girl showed every sign of the gayest humor; Wertheimer seemed a bit exhilarated, De Morbihan was plainly much amused, and even Bannon—bearing heavily on the Frenchman's arm—was chuckling appreciatively. The party piled back into De Morbihan's limousine and were driven up the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, pausing at the Élysée Palace Hotel to drop Bannon and the girl—his daughter?—whoever she was!

Whither it went thereafter Lanyard didn't trouble to ascertain. He drove morosely home and went to bed, though not to sleep for many hours—bitterness of disillusion ate like an acid into his heart.

But for all his anguish he remained in an uncertain temper. He had turned his back on the craft of which he was an acknowledged master for a woman's sake; for nothing else (he argued) had he dedicated himself to poverty and honest effort; and such indigence as he had already tasted was invincibly repugnant to his every inclination. The art of the Lone Wolf, his consummate cunning and subtlety, was still at his command; with himself only to think of, he was altogether contemptuous of the antagonism of the Pack, while none knew better than he how readily the riches of careless Paris might be diverted to his own pockets. A single step aside from the path he had chosen—and to-morrow night he might dine at the Ritz instead of some common *cocher's* cabaret!

And since no one cared—since she had betrayed his faith—what mattered?

Why not?

Yet he could not come to any decision, and the next day found him obstinately, even a little stupidly, pursuing the course he had planned before that disheartening discovery of the previous night.

Because his money was fast ebbing, and motives of prudence alone—if none more worthy—forbade an attempt to replenish his pocketbook by revisiting the little place in the Rue Rogét and realizing on the treasures there, he had determined to have a taximeter fitted to his car and ply for hire until time or chance should settle the question of his future.

Already, indeed, he had complied with the police regulations, received permission to convert his machine into a taxicab, and arranged to have the clock installed.

Leaving his car before noon at the designated depot, he received the promise that it would be ready for him at four o'clock. Returning at that hour, he learned that it couldn't be ready before six. Facing wearily two hours with nothing to do, and too bored and restless to wile them away in a café, he idled listlessly hither and yon along streets and boulevards — indifferent, in the black melancholy oppressing him, whether or not he were recognized.

In the course of his wanderings he found himself turning from the Rue St. Honoré through the Place Vendôme to the Rue de la Paix.

This was unwise, a perilous business, a course he had no right to pursue. And Lanyard knew it. None the less, he persisted.

It was now past five o'clock—deep twilight beneath a cloudless sky—the life of that street of streets, fluent at its swiftest, in full course. All that Paris knew of wealth and beauty, of fashion, and of high estate, moved between the curbs. It needed the temper of a stoic to maintain indifference to the allure of that pageant.

Trudging steadily, the man in the rusty brown ulster all but touched shoulders with men who were all that he had been but a few days since—hale, hearty, well-fed, well-dressed symbols of prosperity—and with exquisite women, exquisitely gowned, extravagantly befurred and bejeweled, with glowing faces and eyes dark with mystery and promise, spirited creatures whose laughter was low music, whose gesture was pride and arrogance.

One and all looked past, over, and through him, unaffectedly unaware that he existed.

The roadway, its asphalt worn smooth as glass, and to-night, by grace of frost, no less hard, rang with clattering hoofs high and clear above the resonance of a multitude of motors. A myriad lights filled the wide channel with diffused radiance. Two endless ranks of shop-windows, facing one another across the tide, flaunted treasures that kings might pardonably have coveted—and often did.

SEPARATED FROM HIM ONLY BY THE THICKNESS OF A SHEET OF PLATE GLASS, WAS THE WEALTH OF PRINCES

Before one corner window Lanyard paused involuntarily.

The shop was that of a famous jeweler. Separated from him only by the thickness of a sheet of plate glass was the wealth of princes. Looking beyond that radiant display, his attention focused itself on the inside of an immense safe-door. To the interior of the safe itself a dapper French salesman was restoring velvet-lined trays of valuables. Lanyard studied the intricate, ponderous mechanism thus laid bare with a thoughtful gaze not altogether guiltless of sardonic bias.

The door wore all the grim appearance of one that, once locked, would prove impregnable to everything save acquaintance with the combination and consent of the time-lock. But grant the Lone Wolf twenty minutes alone with it, twenty minutes free from interruption — he, the only man living who could seduce a time-lock and leave it apparently inviolate!

In that window there was a mirror, set at an angle to one side, and suddenly Lanyard caught its presentment of himself—a gaunt and hungry apparition, with a wolfish air he had never worn when rejoicing in the sobriquet of wolf, his eyes staring with predacious luster.

And lest some passer-by be struck by this betrayal, he turned and moved on hastily.

But his mood was poisoned by this brutal revelation of the wide, deep gulf that yawned between the Lone Wolf of yesterday and Pierre Lamier of to-day, between Michael Lanyard the debonair, the insouciant elegant, the amateur of fine arts and fine clothing, the gentleman cracksman, and that lean, worn, shabby, and dispirited creature who had glared back at him from the jeweler's mirror.

He quickened his pace instinctively—with something of that same instinct of self-preservation that bids the dipsomaniac avert his eyes and hurry past the corner gin-mill—and turned blindly off into the Rue Danou toward the Avenue de l'Opéra.

But this only made it worse for him, for he could not avoid recognition of the softly glowing windows of the Café de Paris, that knew him so well, or escape their reminder of its shining, rich linen, its silver and crystal, its perfumed atmosphere and luxury of warmth and music and shaded lights, its cuisine that even Paris cannot duplicate.

Then the truth came home to him, that he was hungry—not with that brute appetite he had money enough in his pocket to satiate, but with lust of the flesh-pots, with hunger for rare viands and old vintage wines, and to know once more the snug embrace of a dress coat and the atmosphere of ease and station.

Hastily averting his gaze, in sudden panic he darted across the avenue and hurried north, determined to tantalize himself no longer with sights and sounds and thoughts so unsettling.

Half-way across the Boulevard des Capucines, to the east of the Opéra, he leaped for his life from a murderous-minded taxicab, found himself temporarily marooned upon one of those isles of safety which the Parisian calls " thank-Gods," and stood waiting until an opening should offer in the congestion of traffic and permit him to gain the farther sidewalk.

Presently the policeman in the middle of the boulevard signaled with his little white wand, and the stream of east-bound vehicles checked and began to close up to the right of the crossing, upon which they encroached jealously. A taxicab on the outside, next the island, overshot the mark and, obedient to a curt word from the *sergent*, pulled up sharply and began to back into place. Before Lanyard could move round it, its window had drawn opposite him and he was staring in, transfixed by a casual glance.

There was sufficient light to enable him to see clearly the face of the passenger—its pale oval and the eyes whose gaze clung to his with an effect of confused fascination.

She sat quite motionless until one white-gloved hand moved uncertainly toward her bosom.

That brought him to; unconsciously lifting his cap, he stepped back a pace and started to move on.

But at this she bent quickly forward and unlatched the door. It swung wide to him.

Hardly knowing what he was doing, he accepted the mute invitation, stepped into the cab, took the empty seat beside her, and closed the door.

Almost at once the block was lifted, and the car moved on with a jerk, the girl sinking back into her corner with a suggestion of breathlessness, as though the effort she made to seem composed had been almost too much for her strength.

Her face, turned to Lanyard in the half-light, appeared immobile, expressionless; only her eyes were alert with anticipation. But she said nothing.

On his part, Lanyard felt himself hopelessly confounded, in the grasp of emotions that would scarcely suffer him to speak. A great wonder obsessed his mind that she should have opened the door to him no less than that he should have entered through it. Dimly he understood that both had acted without premeditation, and he asked himself: " Was she already regretting that momentary weakness —or whatever it had been?"

" Why did you do that?" he heard himself demand abruptly, and felt that his voice sounded harsh, strained, unnatural.

She stiffened slightly, with a nervous movement of her shoulders.

"Because I saw you."

"Did you want to talk to me, perhaps?" he prompted.

"I was surprised; I had hoped—believed—you had left Paris."

"Without you? Hardly!"

"But you must," she protested with nervous insistence—"you *must* go, as quickly as possible. It isn't safe—"

"I'm all right," he insisted—"able-bodied—in full possession of my senses!"

"But any moment you may be recognized—"

"In this rig? It's not likely. Not that it matters."

She surveyed his costume with a curious glance, perplexed.

"Why are you dressed that way? Is it a disguise?"

"A pretty good one—as a matter of fact, the national costume of one in my present station in life."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Simply that, out of my old job, I've turned to the first resort of the incompetent. I start to-night driving a taxicab."

"Isn't it awfully—risky for you?"

"You'd think so; but it isn't. Few people ever bother to look at a chauffeur. When they take a taxi they're in a hurry, as a rule—preoccupied with their business or pleasure. And then our nondescript livery is a disguise in itself; to the public eye we look as much alike as so many Chinamen!"

"But you are wrong. I recognized you instantly, didn't I? And those others—they're as keen-witted as I—certainly! Oh, you should not have stopped in Paris!"

"I couldn't go without *knowing* what had become of you."

"I was afraid of that," she confessed.

"Then why—"

"Oh, I know what you're going to say! Why did I run away from you?" Then, since he said nothing, she continued unhappily: "I can't tell you. I mean, I don't know how to tell you!"

She kept her face averted, sat gazing blankly out of the window; but when he remained mute and unresponsive—in point of fact not knowing what to say—she turned to look inquiringly at him, and the glare of a passing lamp showed him her countenance profoundly distressed, her mouth tense, brows knitted, eyes clouded with perplexity and appeal.

And of a sudden, seeing her so tormented and so piteous, his indignation ebbed, and with it all his doubts of her; dimly he divined that there was something behind this dark fabric of mystery and inconsistency that, however inexplicable it might seem to him, excused all her apparent faithlessness and instability of character and purpose. He couldn't look upon this girl and listen to her voice and believe that she wasn't at heart as sound and sweet and tender and loyal as any that ever breathed!

A wave of tenderness and compassion swept his heart, and he realized that *he* didn't matter, that nothing mattered so long as she was spared one slightest pang of self-reproach.

He said very gently: "I wouldn't have you distress yourself on my account, Miss Shannon. I quite understand there must be things I *can't* understand—that you must have had your reasons for acting as you did."

"Yes," she said evenly, but again with eyes averted—"I had; but they're not easy, they're impossible to explain to you."

"Yet—when all's said and done—I've no right to exact any explanation."

"Ah, but how can you say that, remembering what we've been through together?"

"You owe me nothing," he insisted, "whereas I owe you everything, even unquestioning faith. Even though I fail, I have this to thank you for—this one not ignoble impulse my life has known."

"You mustn't say that; you mustn't think it. I don't deserve it. You wouldn't say it—if you knew—"

"Perhaps I can guess enough to satisfy myself."

She gave him a swift, sidelong look of challenge, instinctively on the defensive.

"Why," she almost gasped, "what do you think—"

"Does it matter what I think?"

"It does, to me. I wish to know!"

"Well," he conceded reluctantly, "I think that, when you had a chance to think things over calmly, while you waited for me there in the garden, you decided it would be better to—to use your best judgment and—extricate yourself from an embarrassing entanglement—"

"You think that!" she interrupted bitterly. "You think that after you had confided in me, after you'd confessed—when I led you on to it—that you cared for me, after you'd told me how much my faith meant to you—you think that, after all that, I deliberately abandoned you because I suddenly realized you had been the Lone Wolf and shrank from the association—"

"I'm sorry if I've hurt you. But what was I to think?"

"But you were wrong!" she protested vehemently—"quite, quite wrong! I ran away from myself — not from you — and with another motive, too—one that I can't explain."

"You ran away from yourself — not from me?" he repeated, puzzled.

"Don't you understand? Why make it so hard for me? Why make me say outright what pains me so?"

"Oh, I beg of you—"

"But if you won't understand otherwise—I must tell you, I suppose." She checked herself, breathless, flushed, and trembling. "You remember our talk after dinner that night—how I asked you, what if you were to find out you'd been mistaken in me, that I had deceived you; and how I told you it would be impossible for me ever to marry you?"

"I remember," he assented gravely.

"It was because of that," she said, "I ran away; because I hadn't been talking idly when I said what I did; because you *were* mistaken in me, because I *was* deceiving you, because I *could* never marry you, and because—suddenly—I came to know that, if I didn't leave you then and there, I might never find the strength to leave you, and only greater suffering and unhappiness could come of it. I had to go, as much for your sake as for mine."

"You mean me to understand that you found you were beginning to—to care a little for me?"

She made an effort to speak, but in the end answered him only with a dumb inclination of her head.

"And you ran away, then, because love wasn't possible between us?"

Again, silently, she bowed her head.

"Because I had been a criminal, I presume!"

"You've no right to say that—"

"What else can I think? You tell me you were afraid I might induce you to become my wife—something which, for some incomprehensible reason, you claim is impossible. What other explanation can I infer? What other explanation is needed? It's ample, it covers everything, and I've no warrant to complain—God knows!"

"But—" she began, when he cut her short.

"There's one thing I don't understand at all!" he protested. "If that were so, if it was your repugnance for criminal association — *why* did you go back to Bannon?"

She started and glanced at him furtively, a frightened glance.

"You knew that?"

"I saw you—last night—followed you from Viel's to the Élysée Palace Hotel."

"And you thought," she flashed in a vibrant voice—"you thought I was in such company of my own choice!"

"You didn't seem altogether downcast," he countered. "Do you wish me to understand he had recaptured you—that you were with him against your will?"

"No," she said slowly. "No; I returned to him voluntarily, knowing perfectly what I was about."

"Through fear of him—"

"No. I can't claim that."

"Rather than me—"

"You'll never understand," she told him a little wearily. "It was a matter of duty. I had to go back—I had to!"

Her voice trailed off brokenly into a little sob. But as, moved beyond his strength to resist, Lanyard put forth a hand to take the white-gloved one resting on the cushion beside her, she withdrew it with a swift gesture of denial.

"No!" she cried. "Please! You mustn't do that. You only make it harder."

"But you love me!"

"I can't. It's impossible. I would, but may not!"

"Why?"

"I can't tell you."

"If you love me, you must tell me."

She was silent, the white hands working nervously with her handkerchief.

"Lucy!" he insisted—"you must say what stands between you and my love. It's true, I have no right to ask, as I had no right to speak to you of love. But when we have said *what* we have said—we can't stop there. You will tell me, dear?"

She shook her head. "It—it's impossible," she declared in a choking voice.

"But you can't ask me to accept that answer!"

"Oh!" she cried—"*how* can I make you understand? When you said to me what you did that night—it seemed as if a new day were dawning in my life. You gave me to believe it was because of me. You set me upon a pedestal where I'd no right to stand; but to think that you thought me worthy to be there made me proud and happy, and for a little, in my infatuation, I believed I could be worthy of your love and your respect. I thought that if I could be as strong as you for that year you asked to prove your strength I might listen to you, tell you everything, and be forgiven. But I was wrong, how wrong I soon learned. So I had to leave you at whatever cost!"

She ceased to speak, and for several minutes there was silence between them. But for her quick, convulsive breathing, the girl sat like a woman of stone, staring dry-eyed out of the window before her. And Lanyard sat as moveless, the heart in his bosom as heavy and cold as though it were a stone.

At length, lifting his head, he looked at her long and fixedly. But she didn't stir.

"You leave me no alternative," he said in a voice he hardly knew for his own, so dull and hollow was it in his hearing—"I can only think one thing."

"Think what you must," she said lifelessly; "it doesn't matter, so long as you renounce me and put me out of your heart and—leave me."

Without other response he leaned forward and tapped the glass, signaling the driver to stop. And as the cab swerved sharply in toward the curb he laid hold of the door-latch.

"Lucy," he pleaded, "don't let me go believing—"

She seemed suddenly infused with a cold, implacable hostility.

"I tell you," she said cruelly, "I don't care what you think, so long as you *go!*"

The face she now showed him was ashen, its mouth was hard, her eyes blazed feverishly.

And then, as still he hesitated, the cab pulled up, and the driver, leaning back, unlatched the door and threw it open.

With a curt, resigned inclination of the head Lanyard rose and got out.

Immediately the girl grasped the speaking-tube, the door slammed, the cab drew away, and left him standing with the pose, the gesture of one who has just heard sentence of death pronounced on him.

When he roused to know his surroundings he found himself standing on a corner of the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne.

It was bitter cold in the wind sweeping down from the west, and it had grown very dark. Only in the sky above the Bois a long reef of crimson light hung motionless, against which the leafless trees of the avenue lifted their gnarled, weird silhouettes.

While he watched the crimson ebbed swiftly and gave way to mauve, to violet, to black.

CHAPTER XIX

APOSTATE

WHEN there was no more light in the sky a profound sigh escaped Lanyard's lips, and with a slight nod toward the place where the light had been, and the gesture of one who recognizes and signifies submission to an omen, he turned and tramped heavily back across town.

Resembling an automaton rather than a sentient being, he plodded on along the flaring, noisy boulevards, more than once narrowly escaping annihilation beneath the wheels of some coursing motor-cab or ponderous omnibus.

Barely conscious of these escapes, he was altogether indifferent to them; it would have required the pain of some mortal hurt to match the dumb, sick anguish of his soul; more than merely a sunset sky had turned black for him within that hour.

The cold was now intense, and he none too warmly clothed, yet there was sweat upon his brow.

Dully there recurred to him a figure he had employed in one of his talks with Lucy Shannon: that, lacking his faith in her, there would be only emptiness beneath his feet.

And now that faith was wanting in him—it had been taken from him for all his struggles to retain it; and now indeed he danced on emptiness, the rope of temptation tightening round his neck, the weight of thievish instincts pulling it taut—strangling every right aspiration in him, robbing him of the very breath of that new life to which he had tried to dedicate himself.

If she were not worthy, of what worth the fight?

At one stage of his journey he turned aside and, more through habit than desire or design, entered a cheap eating-place and consumed his evening meal without the slightest comprehension of what he ate or whether the food were good or poor.

When he had finished he fled the place like a haunted man.

There was little room in his mood for sustained thought. His wits were reeling giddily in a bottomless abyss of black despair. He felt like a man who, born blind, has through skilful surgery been gifted with the boon of sight for a day or two, then suddenly and without any warning feels himself being thrust back again into eternal darkness.

He knew only that his brief struggle had all been wasted, that behind the flimsy barrier of honorable ambition which his impulses had built between himself and his past, the Lone Wolf was ravening like a fiend unchained. And he felt that, once he permitted that barrier to be broken down, it could never be repaired.

He had set it up by main strength of will, for love of a woman. He must maintain it now for no incentive other than to retain his own good-will, or resign himself utterly to that darkness out of which he had fought his way.

And—he didn't care.

Quite without purpose he sought the machine-shop where he had left his car.

He had no plans; but it was in his mind, a murderous thought, that before another day dawned he might come face to face with Bannon.

Meanwhile he would go to work. He could think out his problems while driving his cab as well as in seclusion; and whatever he ultimately decided to do, he could accomplish little before midnight; finally, it was quite within the bounds of possibility that his car would prove a valuable asset to whatever course of action he might elect to pursue.

Toward seven o'clock, with his machine in perfect running order, he mounted to the seat and took to the streets in reckless humor—the temper of a beast of prey.

The barrier was down—once more the Lone Wolf was on the prowl.

But for the present he controlled himself and acted perfectly his temporary rôle of taxi-bandit, fellow to those thousands that infest Paris. People hailed him from sidewalks and restaurants half a dozen times in the course of the next three hours; he took them up, carried them to their several destinations, received payment, and acknowledged their gratuities with perfunctory thanks—all thoroughly in character and all with little conscious thought.

He saw but one thing, the face of Lucy Shannon, white, tense, glimmering wanly in shadows—the face with which she had dismissed him.

He had but one thought—the desire to read the riddle of her bondage. To accomplish this he was prepared to go to any extreme; if Bannon and his crew came between him and his purpose, so much the worse for them — and, incidentally, so much the better for society! What might happen to himself was of no moment.

He entertained but one design, to become again what he had been, the supreme adventurer, the prince of plunderers, to lose himself once more in the suspense of adventurous days and the delirium of peril-haunted nights, to reincarnate the Lone Wolf and in his guise loot the world anew — to court oblivion even at the prison's gates.

It was after ten when, cruising purposelessly, without a fare, he swung through the Rue Auber into the Place de l'Opéra, and approaching the Café de la Paix, was hailed by a door-boy of that restaurant.

Drawing in to the curb with the indifference that had distinguished his every action of the evening, he waited with a throbbing motor and mind detached and gaze remote from the tides of foot and wheeled traffic brawling past on either hand.

After a moment two figures, both masculine, issued from the revolving door of the café and approached the cab. Lanyard paid them no attention. In his preoccupation he would have needed only the repetition of an address in his ear and the noise of the cab-door slammed to send him off like a shot.

But he received no such order; there was a pause; then he heard one of the men cough heavily, and in a twinkling Lanyard had stiffened to rigidity in his seat. If he had heard that cough but once before, that once had been too often. Without a glance askance, hardening his features to absolute immobility, he knew that the cough was shaking the slighter of those two figures.

And of a sudden he was acutely conscious of the clearness of the frosty atmosphere, of the merciless glare of electricity beating upon him from every side. And poignantly he regretted neglecting to mask himself with his goggles.

He wasn't left long in suspense. The coughing died away by spasms, followed the unmistakably sonorous accents of Bannon's voice.

"Well, my dear boy! I have to thank you for an excellent dinner and a most interesting evening. Pity to break it up so early. Still, business—you know! Sorry you're not going my way—but that's a good-looking taxi you've drawn. What's its number—eh?"

"Haven't the faintest notion," a British voice drawled in response. "Never bother about a taxi's number until it has run over me."

"Great mistake," Bannon rejoined cheerfully. "Always take your taxi's number before entering. Then, if anything happens— However, that's a good-looking chap at the wheel—doesn't look as if he'd run you into any trouble."

"Oh, I fancy not," said the Englishman, bored.

"Still, you never can tell. There's the number on the lamp. Make a note of it and be on the safe side. Or trust me—I *never* forget numbers!"

With this speech Bannon ranged alongside Lanyard and looked him over, keenly malicious enjoyment gleaming in his evil old eyes.

"You *are* an honest-looking chap," he commended with a suspicion of a mocking smile, but in a tone of the most inoffensive admiration—"honest and—ah—what shall I say?—what's the word we're all using nowadays?—efficient! Honest and efficient-looking, capable of better things, or I'm no judge! Forgive an old man's candor, my friend—and take good care of our British cousin here. He doesn't know his way around Paris very well. Still I feel confident he'll come to no harm in *your* company. Here's a franc for you."

With matchless effrontery he produced a coin from the change-pocket of his fur-lined coat and offered it to Lanyard.

Unhesitatingly, permitting no expression to color his features, Lanyard extended his palm, received the coin, dropped it into his own pocket, and carried two fingers to the vizor of his cap.

"*Merci, monsieur,*" he said evenly.

"Ah, that's the right spirit!" the deep voice jeered. "Never be above your station, my man—never hesitate to take a tip! Here, I'll give you another, gratis—get out of this business; you're too good for it. Don't ask me how I know; I can tell by your face. Hello! Why, you're turning down the flag? You haven't started yet!"

"Conversation goes up on the clock," Lanyard replied stolidly in French. He turned and faced Bannon squarely, loosing a glance of venomous hatred into the other's eyes. "The longer I have to stop here listening to your senile monologue," he added with unmistakable meaning, "the more you'll have to *pay*. What address, please?" he added, turning back to get a glimpse of his passenger.

"Hotel Astoria," the porter supplied.

"Very good."

The porter closed the door.

"But remember my advice," Bannon counseled coolly, stepping back and waving his hand to the man in the cab. "Good night."

Without noticing him further, Lanyard took his car smartly away from the curb, wheeled round the corner into the Boulevard des Capucines, and made toward the Rue Royale.

He had gone but a block when the window at his back was lowered and his fare observed pleasantly:

"That you, Lanyard?"

The adventurer hesitated an instant; then, without looking round, responded:

"Wertheimer, eh?"

"Right-o! The old man had me puzzled for a minute with his silly chaffing. Stupid of me, too, because we'd just been talking about you."

"Had you, though!"

"Rather. Hadn't you better take me where we can have a quiet little talk?"

"I'm not conscious of the necessity—"

"Oh, I say!" Wertheimer protested amiably. "Don't be so rotten shirty, old top. Give a chap a chance. Besides, I received to-day a bit of news from Antwerp, I guarantee will interest you."

"Antwerp?" Lanyard repeated, mystified.

"Antwerp—where the ships sail from," Wertheimer laughed—"not Amsterdam, where the diamonds foregather, as you may know."

"I don't follow you, I'm afraid."

"I sha'n't elucidate until we're under cover."

With brief hesitation Lanyard said more placably: "All right. But where shall I take you?"

"Any quiet café will do. You can readily find one—"

"Thanks—no," Lanyard objected dryly. "If I must confabulate with gentlemen of your kidney, I prefer to do it under cover. Even dressed as I am, I might be recognized, you know."

But it was evident that Wertheimer didn't mean to permit himself to be ruffled.

"Then will my modest diggings suit you?" he suggested pleasantly. "I've taken a suite in the Rue Vernet, just back of the Hotel Astoria, where we can be as private as you please. That is, if you've no objection."

"None whatever."

Wertheimer gave him the number and replaced the window.

His rooms in the Rue Vernet proved to be a small ground-floor apartment with private entrance to the street.

"Took the tip from you," he told Lanyard, as he unlocked the door. "I dare say you'd be glad to get back to that little *réz-de-chaussée* of yours in the Rue Rogét. Ripping place, that. By the way—judging from your apparently robust state of health, you haven't been trying to live at home of late."

"Indeed?"

"Indeed yes, *monsieur!* If I may presume to interfere—I'd pull wide of the Rue Rogét for a while—for as long, at least, as you remain in your present intractable temper."

"I fancy you're right," Lanyard said carelessly, following, as Wertheimer turned up the lights, into a modest salon, cozily furnished. "You live here alone, I understand?"

"Quite—make yourself perfectly at ease; nobody can hear us. And," the Englishman added with a laugh, "do forget your pistol, Mr. Lanyard. I'm not Popinot, nor is this Troyon's."

"Still," Lanyard countered, "you've just been dining with Bannon."

Wertheimer laughed easily.

"You had me there," he admitted, unabashed. "I take it you know a bit more about the old man than you did a week ago?"

"Perhaps."

"But sit down—take that chair there, which commands both doors, if you don't trust me."

"Do you think I ought to?"

"Hardly. Otherwise I'd ask you to take my word that you're safe for the time being. As it is, I sha'n't be offended if you keep your gun handy and your sense of self-preservation running under forced draft. But you won't refuse to join me in a whisky-and-soda?"

"No," said Lanyard slowly—"not if we drink from the same bottle."

Again the Englishman laughed unaffectedly as, turning to a side-table, he fetched a decanter, glasses, bottled soda, a box of cigarettes, and placed them on a stand within Lanyard's reach.

The adventurer eyed him narrowly, puzzled. He knew nothing of this man beyond his reputation—something unsavory enough, in all conscience—had seen him only once, and then from a distance, before that conference in the Rue Chaptal. And now he was becoming sensitive to a personality uncommonly insinuating—Wertheimer was displaying all the poise and veneer of an English gentleman of the better caste. More than anybody in the underworld that Lanyard had ever known, save perhaps himself, this blackmailer had the manner of one acquainted with his own respect. And his nonchalance, the good nature with which he accepted Lanyard's pardonable distrust, his genial assumption of fellowship and a common footing attracted.

With all the ease and courtesy of a practised host he measured whisky into Lanyard's glass till checked by a quiet "Thank you," and helping himself generously, opened the soda.

"I'll not ask you to drink with me," he said with a twinkle, "but—chin-chin!" and tilting his glass, half emptied it at a draft.

Muttering formally, at a disadvantage and resenting it, Lanyard drank with less enthusiasm, if without misgivings.

Wertheimer selected a cigarette and lighted it at leisure.

"Well," he said, smiling through a

cloud of smoke, "I think we're fairly on our way to an understanding, considering that you told me to go to hell when last we met!"

His spirit was irresistible. In spite of himself Lanyard returned the smile. "I never knew a man to take it with better grace," he said, lighting his own cigarette.

"Resent it! I *liked* it—you gave us precisely what we asked for."

"Then," Lanyard demanded gravely, "if that's your view-point, if you're decent enough to see it that way—what the devil are you doing in that galley?"

"Mischief makes strange bedfellows, you'll admit. And if you think that a fair question, what are you doing here, with me?"

"Same excuse as in the other instance—trying to find out what your game is."

Wertheimer chuckled and eyed the ceiling with an intimate grin. "My dear fellow," he protested—"all *you* want to know is everything!"

"More or less," Lanyard admitted gracelessly. "One infers you contemplate stopping this side the Channel for some time."

"How so?"

"There's a settled, a personal air about this establishment. It doesn't look as if half your things were still in trunks."

"Oh, these digs! Yes, they are comfortable."

"You don't miss London?"

"Rather! But I shall appreciate it all the more when I go back."

"Then you *can* go back, if you want to?"

"Meaning your impression is I made it too hot for me?" Wertheimer interpreted with a quizzical glance. "I sha'n't tell you about that. But I'm hoping to be able to run home for an occasional week-end without stirring up trouble. Why not go along with me some time?"

Lanyard shook his head.

"Come!" the Englishman rallied him. "Don't put on so much side. I'm not bad company. Why not be sociable, since we're bound to be thrown together more or less in the way of business?"

"Oh, I think not."

"But, my dear chap, you can't go on this way. Playing Parisian taxi-bandit is hardly your shop. And, of course, you understand you won't be permitted to engage in any more remunerative pursuit until you make terms with the powers that be—or leave Paris."

"With Bannon, De Morbihan, Popinot, and yourself—eh?"

"With the same."

"Mr. Wertheimer," Lanyard informed him quietly, "none of you will stop me, if ever I make up my mind to take the field again."

"You haven't been thinking of quitting it—what?" Wertheimer demanded innocently, opening his eyes wide.

"Perhaps."

"Ah, now I begin to see a light! So that's the reason you've come down to tooling a taxi round town. I wondered!"

"You could express yourself less offensively without much effort," Lanyard observed.

"A thousand apologies! But somehow, Mr. Lanyard"—Wertheimer's eyes narrowed thoughtfully—"I can hardly see you content with that line—even if this reform notion isn't simple swank!"

"Well, what do you think?"

"I think," the Englishman laughed—"*I* think this conference doesn't get anywhere in particular. Our simple, trusting natures don't seem to fraternize as spontaneously as they might. We may as well cut the sparring and get down to business—don't you think? But before we do, I'd like permission to offer one word of friendly advice."

"And that is—"

"'Ware Bannon!"

Lanyard nodded. "Thanks," he said.

"I say that in all earnestness," Wertheimer declared. "God knows you're nothing to me, but at least you've played the game like a man; and I won't see you butchered to make an Apache holiday for want of warning."

"Bannon's as vindictive as that, you think?"

"Uncommon! Holds you in the most poisonous regard, if you ask me. Perhaps you know why. I don't. Anyway, it was rotten luck you brought your cart to the door to-night. He named you during dinner, and while apparently he didn't know where to look for you, it was plain he's got no use for you—not, at least, unless your attitude toward the organization has changed in the last few days."

"It hasn't. But I'm obliged to you."

"Sure you can't see your way to work with us?"

"Absolutely."

"Mind you, I'll have to report to the old man. I've got to take him your answer."

"I don't think I need tell *you* what to tell him," said Lanyard with a quiet grin.

"Still, it's worth thinking over. I know the old man's mind well enough to feel safe in offering you any inducement you can name, in reason, if you'll come to us. Ten thousand francs in your pocket before morning, if you like, and freedom to chuck this filthy job of yours—"

"Please stop there!" Lanyard interrupted hotly. "I was beginning to like you, too. But you persist in reminding me you're hand and glove with the brute who had Roddy slaughtered in his sleep."

"Poor devil!" Wertheimer said gently. "That *was* a sickening business, I admit. But who told you—"

"Never mind. It's true, isn't it?"

"Yes," the Englishman admitted gravely—"it's true. It lies at Bannon's door, when all's said. Perhaps you won't believe me, but it's a fact I didn't know positively who was responsible till to-night."

"You don't really expect me to believe that? You were pretty thick with that gang."

"Ah, but on probation only! When they voted Roddy out I wasn't consulted. They kept me in the dark mostly — I flatter myself—because they knew I drew the line at murder. If I had known—this you won't believe, of course—Roddy'd be alive to-day."

"I'd like to believe you," Lanyard admitted. "But when you ask me to sign articles with that vicious assassin—"

"You can't play our game with clean hands," Wertheimer retorted.

Lanyard found no answer to that.

"If you've said all you wished to," he suggested, rising, "I can assure you my answer is final — and go about my business."

"What's your hurry? Sit down. There's more to say—much more."

"As for instance—"

"I had a fancy you might like to put a question or two."

Lanyard shook his head; it was plain to him that Wertheimer designed to draw him out through his interest in Lucy Shannon.

"I haven't the slightest curiosity concerning any of your affairs," he observed.

"But you should have; I could tell you a great many interesting things that intimately affect *your* affairs, if I liked. You must understand that I shall hold the balance of power here from now on."

"Congratulations!" Lanyard laughed derisively.

"No joke, my dear chap. I've been promoted over the heads of your friends, De Morbihan and Popinot, and shall henceforth be—as they say in America—the whole works."

"By what warrant?"

"The illustrious Bannon's. I've been appointed his lieutenant—vice Greggs, deposed for bungling."

"Do you mean to tell me Bannon controls De Morbihan and Popinot?"

The Englishman smiled indulgently. "If you didn't know it, he's commander-in-chief of our allied forces; the presiding genius of the International Underworld, Unlimited."

"Bosh!" cried Lanyard contemptuously. "Why talk to me as if I were a child, to be frightened by any such bogy tale as that?"

"Take it or leave it, my friend. The fact remains. I know, if you don't. I confess I didn't till to-night; but I've learned some things that have opened my eyes. You see, we had a table in a quiet corner at the Café de la Paix, and since the old man's sailing for home before long, it was naturally time for him to unbosom himself rather thoroughly to the one he leaves to act for him in London and Paris. I never suspected our power before he began to talk."

Lanyard, watching the man closely, would have sworn he had never seen one more sober. He was indescribably perplexed by this ostensible candor—mystified and mistrustful.

"And then there's this to be considered, from your side," Wertheimer resumed with the most businesslike manner. "You can work with us without being obliged to deal in any way with the old man or De Morbihan or Popinot; you need never speak to either of them. Bannon will never cross the Atlantic again, and you can do pretty much as you like, within reason—subject to my approval, that is."

"One of us is mad," Lanyard commented profoundly.

"One of us is blind to his best interests," Wertheimer amended with entire good humor.

"Perhaps. Let it go at that. I'm not interested—never did care for fairy tales."

"Don't go yet. There is still much to be said on both sides of our argument."

"Has there been one?"

Of even date, from Antwerp, it read:

UNDERWORLD, PARIS: Greggs arrested to-day, boarding steamer for America, after desperate struggle. Killed himself immediately afterward. Poison. No confession.—Q. 2.

"*Underworld?*" Lanyard queried blankly.

"I'D BETTER GET OUT OF THIS BEFORE I DO YOU AN INJURY"

"Besides, I promised you news from Antwerp."

"To be sure," Lanyard said, and paused, his curiosity at length engaged.

Wertheimer delved into the breast-pocket of his dress coat and produced a blue telegraph-form, handing it to the adventurer.

"Our telegraphic address, of course. 'Q. 2' is our chief factor in Antwerp."

"So they got Greggs!"

"Stupid oaf!" Wertheimer observed; "I've no sympathy to waste on him. The whole affair was a blunder."

"But you got Greggs out and burned Troyon's—"

"Still our friends at the *préfecture* weren't satisfied. Something must have roused their suspicions."

"You don't know what?"

"There must have been a leak somewhere—"

"If so, it would certainly have led the police to me, after all the pains you were at to saddle me with the crime. There's something odder than mere treachery in this, Mr. Wertheimer."

"Perhaps you're right," said the other thoughtfully.

"And it doesn't speak well for the discipline of your precious organization—granting, for the sake of the argument, the possibility of such nonsense."

"Well, well, have your own way about that. I don't insist, so long as you're agreeable to join forces with me."

"Oh, it's with you alone now—is it? Not with that insane bogy, the International Underworld, Unlimited?"

Cheerfully the Englishman assented, nodding: "With me alone. I offer you a clear field. Go where you like, do what you will—I wouldn't have the effrontery to attempt to guide or influence you."

Lanyard kept himself in hand with considerable difficulty.

"But you?" he asked. "Where do you come in?"

Wertheimer lounged back in his chair and laughed quietly. "Need you ask? Must I recall to you the foundations of my prosperity? You had the name of it glib enough on your tongue that night in the Rue Chaptal. When you've done your work you'll come to me and split the proceeds fairly—and as long as you do that, never a syllable will pass my lips!"

"Blackmail!"

"Oh, if you insist! Odd, how displeasing I find that word!"

Abruptly the adventurer got to his feet. "By God!" he cried, "I'd better get out of this before I do you an injury."

The door slammed behind him on a room ringing with Wertheimer's unaffected laughter.

CHAPTER XX

WAR

But why, Lanyard asked himself as, once more behind the wheel, he swung his cab aimlessly away, heedless of traffic regulations—why that blind rage with which he had received Wertheimer's overtures?

Unquestionably the business of blackmailing was despicable enough; and as a master cracksman of the highest caste in the criminal world, the Lone Wolf had warrantably treated with scorn and contempt the advances of a pariah like Wertheimer. But in no such spirit had he comprehended the Englishman's meaning when finally that one came to the point; no cool disdain of the master spirit had colored his attitude, but in the beginning hot indignation, at the end insensate rage.

He puzzled himself. That fit of passion had all the aspect of a psychical inconsistency impossible to reconcile with reason.

He recalled in perplexity how, toward the last, the face of the Englishman had swum in haze before his eyes; with what disfavor, approaching hatred, he had regarded its fixed, false smirk; with what loathing he had suffered the intimacy of Wertheimer's tone; how he had been tempted to fly at the man's throat and shake him senseless in reward of his effrontery—emotions that had suited better an honest man, a man of unblemished honor and integrity subjected to the insolent addresses of a contemptible blackguard, emotions that might well have been expected of the man Lanyard had once dreamed to become.

But now, since he had resigned that infatuate aspiration and turned apostate to all his vows, his part in character had been to laugh in Wertheimer's face and bid him go to the devil ere a worse thing befell him.

Instead of which he had flown into fury; and as he sat brooding over the wheel he knew that were the circumstances to be duplicated his reception of them would be the same.

Was it possible he had changed so absolutely in the course of that short-lived spasm of reform?

He cried no to that; knowing well what he contemplated, that all his plans were laid for that night, and serious mischance alone could hinder him from putting them into effect.

When at length he roused from his reverie, it was to discover that his haphazard course had taken him back toward the heart of Paris; and presently, weary with futile cruising, and being then in the neighborhood of the Madeleine, he sought the cab-rank there and moodily took his place at its end, silencing the motor and relapsing into morose reflection so profound that nothing about him claimed place in his consciousness.

Thus it was that a brace of furtive thugs were able to slouch down the rank, scrutinizing it covertly, but in detail, pause opposite Lanyard's car under pretext of lighting cigarettes, identify him to their satisfaction, and take themselves hastily off—all without his knowledge.

And not until they had quite disappeared did the driver of the cab ahead dare warn him.

Lounging back carelessly, the latter looked the adventurer over inquisitively.

"Is it, then," he inquired civilly, when Lanyard at length glanced round, annoyed by subconsciousness of the other's stare, "that you are in the bad books of that good General Popinot, my friend?"

"Eh—what's that you say?" Lanyard exclaimed, showing a countenance of blank misapprehension.

The man nodded wisely.

"He who is at odds with Popinot," he observed, "does well not to sleep in public. You did not see those two who passed just now and took your number—rats of Montmartre, if I know my Paris! You were dreaming, my friend, and it is my impression that only the presence of those two flics over the way prevented your immediate assassination. If I were you, I should go away very quickly, and never stop till I had put stout walls between myself and Popinot."

A chill of apprehension sent a shiver stealing down Lanyard's spine.

"You're sure?"

"But of a certainty, my old one!"

"A thousand thanks."

Jumping down, the adventurer cranked the motor, sprang back to his seat, and was off like a hunted hare.

And when, more than an hour later, he brought his panting car to a pause in a quiet and empty back street of the Auteuil quarter, after a course that had involved the better part of Paris, it was with the conviction that he had beyond question shaken off pursuit — had there, in fact, been any attempt made to follow him.

He took advantage of that secluded spot to substitute false numbers for those he was licensed to display; then, at more sedate pace, followed the line of the fortifications northward as far as La Muette, where, branching off, he sought and made a circuit of two sides of the private park enclosing the home of Mme. Omber.

But the mansion showed no lights, and there was nothing in the aspect of the lodge and carriage-entrance to lead him to believe that the *châtelaine* had as yet returned to Paris.

Now the night was still young, but Lanyard had his cab to dispose of and not a few other essential details to arrange before he could take definite steps toward the reincarnation of the Lone Wolf.

Picking a most circumspect route across the river—*via* the Pont Mirabeau—to the all-night telegraphic bureau in the Rue de Grenelle, he despatched a cryptic message to the minister of war, then with the same pains to avoid notice made back toward the Rue des Acacias. But it wasn't possible to recross the Seine covertly — in effect, at least—without returning the way he had come—a long détour that irked his impatient spirit to contemplate.

Unwisely he elected to cross by way of the Pont des Invalides—how unwisely was borne in upon him almost as soon as he turned from the brilliant Quai de la Conférence into the darkling Rue Francois Prémier; he had won scarcely twenty yards from the corner when, with a rush, its motor purring like some great tiger-cat, a powerful touring-car swept up from behind, drew abreast, but instead of passing, checked speed until its pace was even with his own.

Struck by the strangeness of this maneuver, he looked quickly round, to recognize the moonlike mask of De Morbihan grinning sardonically at him over the steering-wheel of the black car.

A second hasty glance discovered four men in the back. With no time to identify them, Lanyard questioned their origin as little as their malign intent — Belleville bullies, beyond doubt, drafted from Popinot's batallions, with orders to bring in the Lone Wolf, dead or alive.

He had instant proof that his apprehensions were unexaggerated. Of a sudden De Morbihan cut out his engine's muffler and turned loose his electric horn. Between the deep-chested detonations of the exhaust and the mad, blatant yowling of the warning a hideous clamor echoed and reechoed in that quiet street—a racket in which the report of a revolver-shot was drowned out and went unnoticed. Lanyard himself might have been unaware of it had he not caught, out of the corner of his eye, a flash of fire that spat out at him like a flaming serpent's tongue, and heard the crash of the window behind him falling inward, shattered.

That the shot had no immediate successor was due almost wholly to Lanyard's instant and instinctive action.

Even before the clash of broken glass registered on his consciousness, he threw in the high speed and shot away like a frightened greyhound.

So sudden was this move that it caught De Morbihan himself unprepared. In an instant Lanyard had ten yards' lead. In another he was spinning on two wheels round an acute corner into the Rue Jean Goujon; and in a third, as he shot through that short block to the Avenue d'Antin, had increased his lead to fifteen yards. But he could never hope to better that—rather the contrary. The pursuer was the more powerful car, and captained, to boot, by one reputed to be the most daring and skilful motorist in France.

The reasoning that dictated Lanyard's simple strategy was sound, if unformulated, save in retrospect—barring adventitious interference on the part of the police—something he dared not count upon—his sole hope lay in open flight and in keeping persistently to the better-lighted thoroughfares, where a repetition of the attempt were inadvisable—at least, less probable. There was always a bare chance of an accident — that De Morbihan's car would burst a tire or become pocketed by the traffic, thus enabling Lanyard to strike off into some maze of dark side streets, abandon the cab, and take to cover in good earnest.

But that was a forlorn hope at best, and he knew it. Moreover, an accident was as apt to happen to him as to De Morbihan—given an unsound tire or a puncture, or let him be delayed two seconds by some traffic hindrance, and nothing short of a miracle could save him.

As he swung from the Avenue d'Antin into the Rond Point des Champs-Élysées, the nose of the pursuing car inched up, snoring, on his right, effectually preventing any attempt to strike off toward the east, to the boulevards and the center of the city's night life. He had no choice but to fly westward.

He cut an arc round the sexpartite park of the Rond Point that lost no inch of advantage, and straightened out up the Avenue des Champs-Élysées for the Place de l'Étoile, shooting madly in and out through the tide of more leisurely traffic. And ever the motor of the touring-car purred contentedly just at his elbow.

If there were police about, Lanyard saw nothing of them—not that he would have dreamed of stopping or even of checking speed for anything less than an immovable barrier.

But as the minutes sped it became apparent that there was to be no renewed attempt upon his life for the time being. The pursuers could afford to wait. And it came then to Lanyard that he drove no more alone. Death rode with him, his passenger.

Absorbed though he was with control of his machine, with the ever-changing exigencies of the road and the management of the motor that drew from it its every ounce of power, he found time to think quite clearly of himself, to recognize the fact that he was very likely looking his last on Paris—on life.

Before him, looming ever larger and more darkly beautiful against the field of midnight stars, rose the Arc de Triomphe. He wondered would he reach it alive.

He did; still the pursuit bided its time. But the hood of the touring-car nosed him inexorably round the pedestal of the arch, away from the Avenue de la Grande Armée and into the Avenue du Bois.

Only when in full course for the Porte Dauphine did he appreciate De Morbihan's design. He was to be rushed out into the midnight solitudes of the Bois de Boulogne and there run down and slain out of hand.

But now he began to nurse a tiny, feeble ray of hope.

Once inside the park enclosure he reckoned vaguely on some opportunity to make sudden halt, abandon the car, and, taking refuge in the friendly obscurity of trees and shrubbery, either make good his escape afoot or stand off the Apaches with his pistol until police came to his aid. With night to cloak his movements, and with a space of ground not too clear of trees to shelter in, he dared believe he'd have a chance for his life — whereas in naked streets any such attempt would have proved simply suicidal.

Now and again glances over his shoulder showed him no change in the gap between his own and the car of the assassins. But his motor ran sweet and true—humoring it, coaxing it, he contrived a little longer to hold his own.

Approaching the Porte Dauphine, he became aware of two *sergents de ville* standing in the middle of the way and wildly waving their arms. He held on toward them relentlessly—it was their lives or his—and they leaped aside barely in time to save themselves.

And as he slipped into the park like a hunted shadow he fancied that he heard the sound of a pistol-shot—whether directed at himself by the Apaches, or fired by the police to lend emphasis to their indignation, he couldn't say. But he was grateful enough it was a taxicab he drove—no touring-car—lacking the body of his vehicle for a shield, he couldn't doubt a bullet would long since have found him.

In that dead hour the drives were almost deserted. Between the gates and the head of the first lake he passed only one motor-car, a limousine whose driver shouted something inarticulate as Lanyard hummed past. The freedom from traffic dangers was a relief; but the pursuit was creeping up inexorably, inch by inch, as he swung down the roadway along the eastern border of the lake; and still he found no opening, recognized no invitation in the lay of the land to try his only plan. Moreover, as matters stood, if he were to attempt it, the Apaches would be upon him before he could jump from his seat.

Bending low over the wheel, searching with anxious eyes the shadowed reaches of that winding drive, he steered for a time with one hand, while with the other tore open his ulster and brought his pistol into readiness.

Topping the brow of the incline, he heard above the whine of his motor the sharp clatter of a horse's hoofs and surmised that at last the police had given chase.

And then, on a slight down-grade, though he took it at perilous speed and seemed veritably to ride the wind, the pursuing machine, aided by its greater weight, began to close in still more rapidly. Momentarily the hoarse roaring of its motor sounded more loud and menacing. It became a mere question of seconds.

Then inspiration of despair came to him, as wild as any that was ever conceived by brain of man.

They approached a point where a dense plantation walled the road on the left. To the right, a wide footwalk of asphalt separated the drive from a gentle declivity, sown with saplings, running down to the lake.

Rising in his place, Lanyard slipped from under him the heavy water-proof cushion that fitted the seat.

Then, edging ever to the left of the middle of the road, abruptly he shut off power and applied the brakes with all his might.

From its terrific speed the taxicab came to a stop almost within its length.

Lanyard was thrown forward against the wheel, but having braced in anticipation, escaped injury and effected instant recovery.

The car of the Apaches was upon him in a pulse-beat. With no least warning of his intention, De Morbihan had no time to employ brakes. Lanyard saw its dark shape flash past the windows of his cab and heard a shout of triumph. Then, with all his might, he flung the heavy cushion across that scant space, directly into the face of De Morbihan.

It flew straight and true.

In alarm, unable to comprehend the nature of that great, dark, whirling mass, De Morbihan attempted to lift a warding elbow. He was too slow—the cushion caught him full force on the side of the head, and before he could recover or guess what he was doing, he had twisted the wheel sharply to the right.

The car, running at little less than locomotive speed, shot like a projectile from a cannon's mouth across that strip of sidewalk, caught its right fore wheel against a sapling, swung heavily broadside to the drive, and turned completely over as it shot down the gentle slope to the lake.

The terrific crash of this catastrophe was followed by a hideous chorus of oaths, shrieks, cries, and groans.

Promptly Lanyard started his motor anew and, trembling in every limb, ran on for several hundred yards. But time pressed, and the usefulness of his car was at an end as far as he was concerned; there was no saying how many times its identity might not have been established in the course of that wild chase through Paris, or how soon the police might contrive to overhaul and apprehend him; and as soon as a bend in the road shut off the scene of wreck, he stopped finally, jumped down, and plunged headlong into the dark midnight heart of the Bois, seeking its silences where trees stood thickest and lights were few.

Later, like some furtive, worried creature of the night—panting, disheveled, his rough clothing stained and muddied—he slunk across an open space a mile from his point of disappearance, dropped cautiously down to the dry bed of the moat, climbed as stealthily the slippery side of the fortifications, darted across the inner boulevard, and began to describe a wide arc to his destination, the Omber house.

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE BACK TRAIL

INNOCENT of either satisfaction or any sort of exultation over his escape and the downfall of his enemies, Lanyard's mood was dark. The longer he pondered the affair, the more inexplicable it bulked to his understanding. He had never expected to defy the Pack and get off lightly; but he had anticipated no overt attempt to discipline him pending proof of insincerity in his purpose to reform. A retired competitor isn't to be feared.

Either Wertheimer hadn't believed him or Bannon had rejected the report presumably carried him by Lucy Shannon—at all events, they hadn't waited for Lanyard to demonstrate his will. They hadn't bothered to declare war; with less warning than a rattlesnake gives they had struck—out of the dark—at his back.

And so—Lanyard swore grimly—even so would he strike, now that it was his turn.

But he would have given much for a clue to the riddle. Why had this feud been forced upon him, who asked nothing better than to be left alone? It wasn't altogether the professional jealousy of De Morbihan, Popinot, and Wertheimer—or so he told himself; it was the mysterious, rancorous spite that animated Bannon.

Again, why?

Could it be that Bannon so ruthlessly resented such aid and encouragement as the adventurer had afforded his alleged daughter in her abortive attempt to escape? Or that Bannon held Lanyard responsible for the arrest and death of his lieutenant, Greggs?

Or was it possible that there was really anything substantial at the bottom of Wertheimer's wild yarn about the pretentiously designated "International Underworld, Limited"? Was this really a demonstration of determination to crush out competition—"and hang the expense"?

Or was there something less superficially tangible in the affair? Had Bannon some secret, personal animus against Michael Lanyard?

Debating these questions from every angle, but to no end, he worked himself into a fine fury, vowing he'd consummate this final *coup*, sequestrate himself in England for a time—until the storm had blown over—plan his campaign of avengement, and return to Paris to expose De Morbihan—presuming him to have survived the disaster in the Bois—exterminate Popinot utterly, drive Wertheimer back to England and permanent retirement in Dartmoor, and wrest an accounting from Bannon, though it were delivered with that aged invalid's last wheezing gasps of breath.

In this temper Lanyard arrived, past one in the morning, under the walls of the Omber place.

Now if it were violation of the tenets of his craft to revisit premises once successfully entered, he showed them at least the prudent deference of selecting a fresh point of attack—one chosen earlier, in the course of his first circuit of the walls. It hadn't escaped him then that this brick-and-plaster construction was in bad repair; he had marked down several places where the weather had eaten the outer coat of plaster altogether away. At the first of these, midway between the avenue and the junction of the side streets, he hesitated.

As he had foreseen, the mortar that bound the wall together was crumbling. It was no great task to work loose one of the exposed bricks, establishing a foothold to a position whence his other hand, gloved, could seize the top of the wall, cast the ulster neatly over the glass-toothed upper curbing and, thus protected, swing himself bodily atop the thing.

But there, momentarily, he paused in doubt. In that singularly exposed and comfortless position, poised ten feet above the lifeless street on the one hand and with the black mystery of the neglected park on the other, he was seized and shaken by a sudden and unpresaged revulsion of feeling in no way colored by any sort of alarm. For he was quite alone and unobserved; he would have sworn to that; had it been otherwise, his acute faculties, trained to such work as this and now keyed to concert pitch, couldn't have failed to give him warning of the quarter whence danger threatened.

Notwithstanding, he was afraid, as though fear's very self had laid hold of his soul by the heels.

He was afraid with a great fear, such as he had never dreamed to know, who had known before and often the wincing of the flesh from risk of brutal hurt, the shuddering of the spirit in the face of death, such horror of mind and body alike as had visited him that morning in the bedchamber of the butchered Roddy.

But none of these had in any way taught him the true measure of fear, such as now possessed him so utterly that he quaked like a naked soul in the inexorable, frigid grasp of the Eternal.

He was afraid of himself, in panic terror of that ego which tenanted the envelope of his personality, the shell of functioning, sensitive flesh that he called Michael Lanyard; he was afraid of the strange, silent, incomprehensible self that lurked occult in him; of that masked, illegible self which, in its inscrutable whim, had power to make him fine or to make him base; of that self, impalpable and elusive as any shadow, yet strong with a strength beyond his power to withstand, of which he knew nothing save that it was there, his master and his fate, the implacable dictator of his every thought, impulse, and action, in one the grave of yesterday, the cup of to-day, the womb of to-morrow.

And he looked up and round at the tired, dull faces of those ancient residences that loomed across the way with their long ranks of blind and lightless windows, sleeping in the quiet dignity of commonplace honor, without a suspicion that he had stolen in among them to rend apart and make a mockery of their decent peace —he, the grim and deadly thing that walked by night, the Lone Wolf, the creature of pillage and rapine, the scourged slave of that self which knew no law.

And for a little longer he lingered there in trembling, not knowing whether he was to go back or go forward.

Then slowly that terror passed like the lifting of a nightmare from the brain of a sleeper, and with a start, with a little shiver and a sigh, Lanyard went forward as one driven.

Dropping to the ground with an impact muffled by the soft, damp turf, he made himself one with the shadows of the park, as silent, as intangible, as fugitive as they, until presently he came out beneath the stars, on the open lawn running up to the wing that housed the library.

From one of the library windows a shallow stone balcony jutted out eight feet above the lawn—a height so insignificant that, with one bound grasping its stone balustrade, the adventurer was upon it in a brace of seconds.

Nor did the windows — long French windows, opening inward—offer any considerable obstacle; a penknife expeditiously removed the old, dry putty round one of the small, lozenge-shaped panes, then dislodged the pane itself; his hand through this opening readily found and turned the latch; a cautious pressure created an opening between the two wings wide enough to permit the passage of his body, and—he stood inside the library, refastening the latch.

He had made no sound and, thanks to thorough prior acquaintance with the ground, as well as with the combination of the safe, he needed no light. The screen of cinnabar afforded him all the protection he required; and because he meant to accomplish his purpose and be out of the house with almost inconceivable swiftness, he didn't even trouble to explore the household — beyond a swift and casual survey of the adjoining salons.

The clock in the reception-hall chimed the three-quarters as he ensconced himself between screen and safe and grasped the combination-knob.

But he did not turn it. That mellow music died out slowly and left him unstirring in the silence and gloom, his eyes staring wide into blackness at nothing, his jaw set and rigid, his knitted forehead damp with sweat, his hands so tightly clenched that the nails bit painfully into the flesh of his palms, while he looked back over the abyss that yawned between the Lone Wolf of to-night and the man who had, within the week, knelt before that safe in company with the woman he loved, bent on making restitution of his theft that his soul might be saved through her faith in him.

He was seeing himself as he now was, the thief caught in his crime by his conscience — or whatever he must call his conscience; this thing within him that revolted from his purpose, this sense of honor and of honesty that had grown more dear to him than anything in life he held desirable, that in a few brief days had knitted itself inextricably into the fiber of his being, so that to deny it were against nature.

He closed his eyes to shut out the accusing darkness, and knelt on unstirring, save as he shuddered now and again with the sickness of a strong man rent in the conflict of man's dual nature.

Minutes passed without his knowledge in the crisis of that struggle.

But at length he grew more calm; his hands relaxed, the muscles of his brow smoothed out, he breathed more slowly and more deeply, his set lips parted and through them a profound sigh escaped, whispering through the stillness.

A great weariness was upon him as he rose slowly and heavily from the floor and stood erect, no longer the slave of self, but its master, free at last and for all time from that ancient evil which so long had held his soul in bondage.

And then, in that moment of victory, through the deep hush reigning in that house, he heard the sound of an incautious footfall on the parquetry of the hallway.

CHAPTER XXII

A MEETING BY THE SAFE

It was a sound so slight, so very small and still, that only a supersubtle sense of hearing could have distinguished it from the confused multiplicity of almost inaudible, interwoven sounds, that go to make the slumberous quiet by night of that essentially animate organism, the human habitation.

Lanyard, whose training had taught him how to listen, had early learned that the nocturnal hush of one house is to be differentiated from that of another as readily as the respiration of two sleepers may be discriminated. He knew that every house had its singular cadence, its own gentle movement of muted but harmonious sounds wherein the introduction of alien sounds produced instant discord.

Now, in the muted voice of this vast mansion, he had detected a little flutter of discordance, sounding a note of stealth—such a note as no move of his own since entering had evoked.

He was not only no longer alone, but shared the vacant magnificence of those great salons with one whose purpose was as furtive, as secret, as wary as his own; not with some servant or watchman roused by a subjective sense of the abnormal and coming to investigate, but with one who had no more than himself a lawful errand there.

And while Lanyard stood at alert attention the sound was repeated from a point less distant. This new intruder was moving through the salons to the library.

In two swift strides Lanyard left the shelter of the screen and ensconced himself in the recess of one of the tall windows, behind its heavy velvet hangings.

That movement could have been timed no more precisely had it been rehearsed. He was barely in hiding when a shape of shadow slipped into the library, paused beside the massive desk, and raked the room with a powerful flash-lamp.

Its initial glare struck full and dazzlingly into Lanyard's eyes as he peered through a narrow opening in the portière; and though it was instantly shifted, for several moments a blur of peacock color, blending, ebbing, hung like a curtain in the darkness, and he could see nothing distinctly — only the trail traced by that dancing spot-light over walls and furnishings.

When at length his vision cleared the other was kneeling in turn before the safe —or, rather, rising from a kneeling position there, for more light was needed, and this one, lacking the patience of his studious caution, turned back to the desk, seized the electric reading-lamp, and transferred it to the floor between the safe and the screen.

But even before she had put down the lamp Lanyard had recognized the woman; before the swift flood of light followed the dull click of the switch he knew that she was Lucy Shannon.

He felt dazed, half-stunned, suffocated —much as he had felt with Greggs's fingers tightening on his windpipe that week-old night at Troyon's.

For an instant he experienced real difficulty about breathing and was conscious of a sickish throbbing in his temples, while the pounding in his bosom was as the tolling of a great bell. He stared, swaying like a man who has been struck a heavy blow.

In one breath he swore it could not, and knew it must, be she.

The light, gushing from the opaque hood, made the safe door a glare, and was thrown back into her intent young face. Even so, he would have recognized the sharp silhouette cut by her lithe, sweet body against the glow, the poise of her head, the carriage of her shoulders, the gracious bosom rounding her tailored coat.

She was all in black, even to her gloved hands—no trace of white or any color showing on her person but the fair curve of her cheek below the mask and the red of her lips. And if that were not enough, the intelligence with which she attacked the combination and the confident, businesslike precision that distinguished her every action proved her an apt pupil in that business.

His thoughts were all weltering in misery and confusion. He knew what this encounter meant, appreciated that it explained many things he would have thought questionable had not the strength of his infatuation forbade him to consider them at all; but in the pain and anguish of that moment he could entertain but one thought, which possessed him altogether—the thought that she must somehow be saved from the crime she contemplated.

But while he delayed, shrinking from the necessity of discovering himself to her, it was made clear that she had become sensitive to his presence.

He had made no sound since she entered, had not even stirred; but somehow she had divined that some one was there, in the recess of the window, watching her.

In the act of opening the safe—working the combination from that very sheet of paper on which he had made memoranda of its sequence—he saw her pause, freeze to a pose of attention, then turn to stare directly at the portière behind which he was concealed. And through an eternal second he watched her kneeling there, so still that she seemed not even to breathe, her gaze fixed and level, waiting for some sound, some tremor of the drapery folds to confirm her suspicion.

When at length she stirred it was to rise in one swift, alert movement. And now as she paused with her slight shoulders squared and her head thrown back defiantly, challengingly, he knew *she* knew he was there.

As if without will of his own, but drawn irresistibly by her gaze, he stepped out from hiding.

And since he was no more the Lone Wolf, but now a simple man in agony, with no consideration for their situation, with no thought for the fact that they were both housebreakers and that the slightest sound might raise a hue and cry upon them, he took a faltering step toward her, stopped, flung forth a hand with a gesture of appeal, and stammered:

"Lucy—you—"

His voice broke. He waited.

She didn't answer other than to recoil as though he had offered to strike her, and she continued to retreat, wearing a look of utter grief and wretchedness, until presently the table stopped her, and she leaned back against it, as if glad of the support.

"Oh!" she cried, trembling—"why—*why* did you do it?"

He might have answered her in kind, but self-justification passed his power. He couldn't say: "Because to-night you made me lose faith in life itself, and I thought to forget you by going to the devil the quickest way I knew—this way!"—though that was true. He couldn't say: "Because, a thief from boyhood, habit proved too strong for me, and I couldn't withstand temptation!"—for that was untrue.

He could only hang his head and wretchedly confess: "I don't know."

As if he hadn't spoken, as if she hadn't heard, she cried again: "Why—oh, why—did you do it? I was so proud of you, so sure of you — the man who had turned straight because of me! It compensated. But now!"

Her voice broke in a short, dry sob.

"Compensated?" he repeated stupidly.

"Yes, compensated." She threw back her head with a gesture of impatience. "For this — don't you understand? — for this that I'm doing! You don't suppose I've come here of my own accord?—that I went back to Bannon for any reason but to try to save you from him? I knew something of his power, and you didn't; I knew, if I went away with you he'd never rest until he had you murdered, if he had to follow you round the world to do it! And I thought if I could mislead him by lies for a little time—long enough to give you opportunity to leave France—I thought—perhaps—if I could overcome my terror of him—I might be able to communicate with the police, denounce him."

She hesitated, breathless and appealing.

At her first words he had drawn close to her; and all their speech was couched in muted murmurings, barely more than whisperings. And this was quite instinctive, for in the passion of that meeting both had been carried beyond considerations of prudence, their most coherent thought being that now, once and for all time, all misunderstanding between them must be done away with.

And now, as naturally as though they had been lovers always, Lanyard possessed himself of her hand.

"You cared as much as that!" he said.

"I love you," she declared tensely—"I love you so much I am ready to sacrifice everything for you—life, liberty, honor—"

"Hush, dearest, hush!" he begged, half distracted between joy and pain.

"I mean it; if honor could hold me back, do you think I would have broken in here to-night to rob for Bannon?"

"He sent you, eh?" Lanyard commented in a dangerous voice.

"He was too cunning for me. I was afraid to tell you. I meant to tell—to warn you this evening in the cab. And then I thought perhaps if I were cold and distant and let you go on believing me the worst of women—perhaps you would go away, save yourself, forget me."

"Never!"

"I tried to carry out my program of lying to him, but he wouldn't have it. They forced the truth from me by threats."

"They wouldn't dare—"

"They dare anything, I tell you. But it wasn't threats of personal injury to me, but to you, if I refused to tell them the truth, the whole truth. They knew enough of what had happened, through their spies, to go on, and they tormented and bullied me until I broke down and told them everything. And when they learned you had replaced the jewels here, Bannon told me I must return and bring them to him. He said if I refused he'd have you killed before morning. I held out until to-night; then, just as I was going to bed, he received a telephone message, and told me you were driving a taxi and were being followed by Apaches and wouldn't live till daylight if I refused."

"You came alone?"

"No. Three men brought me to the gate. They're waiting outside in the park."

"Apaches?"

"Two of them—I presume they're Apaches, at least. The third is Captain Ekstrom."

"Ekstrom!" Lanyard cried in despair. "Is he—"

The dull but heavy slam of the great front doors silenced him.

CHAPTER XXIII

A STRANGE INTERVIEW

Releasing the girl instantly, before the crash had ceased to reverberate within those walls, Lanyard slipped to one side of the doorway, whence he could command the perspective of salons together with a partial view of the front doors.

He was no more than established there, in the shadow and shelter of the portières, when light from an electrolier flooded the reception-hall.

It showed him first a single figure, that of a handsome woman well beyond middle age, but still well poised and vigorous of mien, a lady of commanding presence. She was in full evening dress of such magnificence as to suggest attendance at some function of state. Even had he not known well the features of Mme. Omber, he would have guessed her to be the mistress of the establishment.

Standing beneath the chandelier, she was restoring a key to a brocaded hand-bag. This done, she turned her head and spoke over her shoulder. Promptly there came into view a second woman of much the same age, but even more strong and able of appearance—a woman in plain, dark garments, undoubtedly *madame's* maid.

Handing over her hand-bag, Mme. Omber unlatched the throat of her ermine cloak and surrendered it to the servant's hands.

Her next words were audible to the

eavesdropper, and reassuring in so far as they indicated ignorance of anything amiss:

"Thank you, Sidonie. You may go to bed now."

"*Madame* will not require me to undress her?"

"I'm not ready yet. When I am, I can take care of myself. It's late—much later than I usually keep you up, Sidonie, and I prefer you to go to bed. It doesn't improve your temper to lose your beauty sleep."

"Many thanks, *madame*. Good night, *madame*."

"Good night."

The maid moved off toward the main staircase, while the mistress of the house turned deliberately through the salon toward the library.

At this, swinging back to the girl in a stride, and impulsively grasping her wrist to compel attention, Lanyard spoke in a rapid whisper, mouth close beside her cheek.

"This way," he said, imperatively drawing her toward the window by which he had entered. "There's a balcony outside—a short drop to the ground." And unlatching the window, he urged her through it. "Try to leave by the back gateway—the one I showed you—avoiding Ekstrom—"

"But you are coming!" she insisted, hanging back.

"Impossible. There isn't time for us both to escape undetected. I shall keep her interested only long enough to give you plenty of time to get away. But take this"—and he pressed his automatic into her hand. "No—take it. I've another," he lied, "and you may need it. Don't fear for me, but go—oh, my heart—go!"

The footfalls of Mme. Omber were sounding ominously near by this time; and without giving the girl more time to protest, Lanyard thrust her forcibly through the windows, closed them, shot the latch, and stole like a ghost round the farther side of the desk, pausing within a few feet of the screen and safe.

The footsteps were muffled by a rug in the drawing-room—the woman was walking slowly, heavily, like one weary and thoughtful.

Where the girl had placed it, behind the cinnabar screen, the desk-lamp was still alight, and Lanyard knew that the diffusion of its reflected rays was enough to project his figure in silhouette against the glow distinctly visible to one on the threshold.

Now everything hung upon the temperament of the householder, how she would take that apparition—whether quietly, deceived by Lanyard's mumming into believing she had only a poor thievish fool to deal with, or with *bourgeoise* hysteria.

In the latter event, Lanyard's hand was ready planted, palm down, on the top of the desk; should the other attempt to raise an alarm, a single bound would carry the adventurer across it in full flight for the front doors.

In the doorway the mistress of the house appeared and halted, quick, glinting eyes shifting from the glow on the floor to the dark figure of the thief. Then, with a quick gesture, putting forth a hand, she found the chandelier switch and turned on a blaze of light.

As this happened Lanyard cowered, lifting an elbow as if to guard his face—as if expecting to find himself under the muzzle of a revolver.

The gesture had the calculated effect of focusing the attention of the woman directly to him, after one swift glance round had taken in the curtains that were still swaying at the window, and shown her a room tenanted only by herself and a cringing thief. And immediately it was made manifest that, whether or not deceived, she meant to take the situation quietly, if with a strong hand.

Her eyes narrowed and the muscles of her square and almost masculine jaw stood out ominously as she looked the intruder up and down in silence. Eventually a flicker of contempt moderated the grimness of her dark countenance. She took three steps forward, stopping on the other side of the desk, her back to the doorway.

Lanyard trembled visibly.

"Well!"—the word boomed like the opening gun of an engagement. "Well, my man!"—the shrewd eyes swerved to the closed door of the safe and quickly back again—"you don't seem to have accomplished a great deal!"

Lanyard gripped the edge of the desk, quivering.

"For God's sake, *madame*," he blurted in a husky, shaken voice, nothing like his own—"don't have me arrested! Give me a chance! I haven't taken anything. Don't call the flics!"

He paused, lifting an uncertain hand toward his throat, as if his tongue had gone dry.

"Come, come!" the woman answered, with a look almost of pity. "I haven't called any one—as yet."

The fingers of one strong white hand were drumming gently on the top of the desk; then, with a movement so quick and sure that Lanyard himself could hardly have bettered it, they slipped to a handle of a drawer, jerked it open, closed round the butt of a revolver, and presented it at Lanyard's head.

Automatically he lifted his hands.

"Don't shoot!" he cried. "I'm not armed—"

"Is that the truth?"

"You've only to search me, *madame!*"

"Thanks!" *Madame's* accents now discovered a trace of somewhat dry humor. "I'll leave that to you. Turn out your pockets on the desk there—and remember, I'll stand no nonsense!"

The weapon covered Lanyard steadily, leaving him no alternative but to obey. As for that, he was glad of the excuse to listen for any sound to indicate how the girl was faring in her flight. And he made a pretense of trembling fingers to cover the slowness with which he complied.

But he heard nothing.

When at length he had visibly turned every pocket inside out, and their contents lay upon the desk, the woman looked them over incuriously.

"Put them back," she said curtly. "And then fetch that chair over there—the one in the corner. I've a notion I'd like to talk to you. That's the usual thing, isn't it?"

"How?" Lanyard demanded with a vacant stare.

"In all the criminal novels I've ever read, the law-abiding householder always sits down and has a sociable chat with the housebreaker—before calling in the police. I'm afraid that's part of the price you've to pay for my hospitality."

She paused, eying Lanyard inquisitively while he replaced his belongings in his pockets. "Now get that chair," she ordered, and waited, standing, until she had been obeyed. "That's it — there! Sit down."

Resting herself against the side of the desk, the revolver held negligently, the speaker favored Lanyard with a second inspection, at her leisure, the hardness of her eyes modified, and that anger which primarily had marked her countenance gone by the time she chose to pursue her catechism.

"What's your name? No — don't answer! I saw your eyes waver, and I'm not interested in a makeshift *alias*. But it's a stock question, you know. Do you care for a cigar?"

She opened a mahogany humidor on the desk and extracted a box.

"No, thanks."

"Right — according to Hoyle — the criminal always refuses to smoke in these scenes. But let's forget the book and write our own lines. I'll ask you an original question: *Why* were you acting just now?"

"Acting?" Lanyard repeated, intrigued by the acuteness of this masterful woman's mentality.

"Precisely — pretending you're an ordinary criminal. For a moment I actually believed you afraid of me. But you're neither that nor a common crook. How do I know? Because you're unarmed; your voice has changed in the last two minutes to that of a cultivated man; you've stopped cringing and started thinking; and the way you walked across the floor just now and handled that chair showed me how powerfully you're made. If I hadn't found this revolver you could overpower me in an instant—and I'm no weakling, as women go. Then why the acting?"

Studying his captor with narrow interest, Lanyard smiled faintly and shrugged, but made no response. He could do no more than this—no more than spar for time. The longer he indulged this woman in her whim for the bizarre, the more assured were Lucy's chances of escape. By this time, he reckoned, she must have found her way through the service gate to the street. But he was on edge with apprehension of mischance.

"Come, come!" Mme. Omber insisted. "You're hardly civil, my good man. Answer my question."

"You don't expect me to—do you?"

"Why not? You owe me at least satisfaction of my curiosity in return for breaking into my house."

"But if, as you suggest, I am—or was

—acting with a purpose, why do you expect me to give the show away?"

"That's logic. I knew you could think. More's the pity!"

"Pity I can think?"

"Pity you can get your own consent to waste yourself like this. I'm an old woman, and I know men better than most; I can see ability in you; so I say it's a pity you won't employ it to better advantage. Don't misunderstand me; this isn't the conventional act. I don't hold with encouraging a fool in his folly. You're a fool, for all your intelligence, and the only cure I can see for you is drastic punishment."

"Meaning the Santé, *madame?*"

"Quite so. I tell you frankly, when I'm finished lecturing you, off you go to prison."

"If that's the case, I don't see I stand to gain much by retailing the history of my life. This seems to be your cue to ring for servants to call the police."

A glint of anger shone in the woman's eyes.

"You're right," she said shortly; "I dare say Sidonie isn't asleep yet. I'll get her to telephone while I stand guard over you."

Bending over the desk, without removing her gaze from the adventurer, his captor groped for, found, and pressed a call-button.

From some remote quarter of the house sounded the grumble of an electric bell.

"Pity you're so brazen," she commented. "Just a little less side, and you'd be a rather engaging person!"

Lanyard made no reply. In fact, he wasn't attending.

In this suspense the iron control which had always heretofore been his was breaking down—since now it was for another that he was concerned. And he wasted no strength trying to enforce it. The stress of his anxiety was both undisguised and indisguisable. Nor did Mme. Omber overlook it.

"What's the trouble, eh? Is it that already the cell door clangs loudly in your ears?"

As the woman spoke Lanyard left his chair with a spring as lithe and sure and swift as an animal's, that carried him like a shot across the two yards or so that separated them.

A hair's breath of error in his reckoning would have finished him, for the other had been alert for just such a move, and the revolver was nearly level with Lanyard's head when he seized it by the barrel, imprisoned the woman's wrist with his other hand, and in two movements had possessed himself of the pistol without hurting its owner.

"Don't be alarmed," he said quietly. "I'm not going to do anything more violent than to put this out of commission."

Breaking it smartly, he shot a shower of cartridges to the floor. The empty weapon itself he tossed into a waste-basket beneath the desk.

"Hope I didn't hurt you," he added abstractedly—"but your pistol was in my way!"

He took a stride toward the door, then hung there in hesitation, frowning absently at the woman, who, without moving, laughed quietly and eyed Lanyard with a twinkle of malicious diversion.

The adventurer returned her stare with one of thoughtful appraisal; from the first he had recognized in her a character of uncommon tolerance and amiability.

"Pardon, *madame,* but—" he began abruptly; then checked himself in constrained appreciation of his impudence.

"If that's permission to interrupt your reverie," Mme. Omber remarked, "I don't mind telling you you're the strangest burglar I ever heard of!"

Footfalls became audible on the staircase—the hasty, scuffling sounds of slippered feet.

"Is that you, Sidonie?" *madame* called.

The voice of the maid replied: "Yes, *madame*—coming!"

"Well—don't, just yet. Wait there till I call you."

"Very good, *madame.*"

The woman returned complete attention to Lanyard.

"Now, *monsieur* of two minds, what is it you wish?"

"Why did you do that?" the adventurer asked, nodding toward the reception-hall.

"Tell Sidonie to wait instead of calling for help? Because—well, because you interest me strangely. I've a curious notion you're in desperate quandary and about to throw yourself on my mercy."

"I am," Lanyard admitted tersely.

"Ah! Now this does begin to grow interesting! Would you mind telling me why?"

"Because, *madame,* I have done you a great service, and feel I can count upon your gratitude."

The Frenchwoman's eyebrows lifted at this. "Doubtless *monsieur* knows what he's talking about—"

"Listen, *madame.* I am in love with a young woman, an American, a stranger, and friendless in Paris. If anything happens to me to-night, if I am arrested or assassinated—"

"Is that likely?"

"Quite likely, *madame.* I have enemies among the Apaches and in my own profession as well. I have reason to suspect that some of these are in this neighborhood to-night. I may possibly not escape them. In that event, this young lady of whom I speak will need a protector."

"And why must I interest myself in her fate, pray?"

"Because, *madame,* of this service I have done you. Recently, in London, you were robbed—"

The woman started and colored with excitement. "You know something of my stolen jewels?"

"Everything, *madame;* it was I who stole them."

"You? You are, then, that Lone Wolf?"

"I was, *madame.*"

"Why the past tense?" the woman demanded, eying him with a gathering frown.

"Because I am done with thieving."

She threw back her head and laughed, but without mirth. "A likely story, *monsieur!* Have you reformed since I caught you here—"

"Does it matter when? I take it that proof, visible, tangible proof of my sincerity, more than a meaningless date, would be needed to convince you."

"No doubt about that, Monsieur—the Lone Wolf!"

"Could you wish better proof than that of restoration of your stolen property?"

"Are you trying to bribe me to let you off with an offer to return my jewels?"

"I'm afraid emergency reformation wouldn't persuade you—"

"You do well to be so afraid."

"But if I can prove I've already restored your jewels—"

"But you cannot."

"If *madame* will do me the favor to open her safe she will find them there—conspicuously placed."

"What nonsense—"

"Am I in error in assuming that *madame* didn't return from England until quite recently?"

"But to-day, in fact—"

"And you haven't troubled to investigate your safe since returning?"

"It had not occurred to me—"

"Then why not test my assertion before denying it?"

With an incredulous shrug Mme. Omber terminated a puzzled scrutiny of Lanyard's countenance and turned to the safe.

"But to have done what you declare you have," she argued, "you must have known the combination—since it appears you haven't done any breaking open."

The sequence of the combination ran glibly off Lanyard's tongue. And at this, with every evidence of excitement, at length beginning to hope—more than to believe—the woman set herself to open the strong-box. Within a minute she had succeeded, and the morocco-bound jewel-box was in her hand.

A hasty examination assured her its treasure was intact.

"But why—" she stammered, pale with emotion—"why, *monsieur, why?*"

"Because I had decided to leave off stealing for a livelihood."

"When did you bring these jewels here?"

"Four or five nights since."

"And then—repented, eh?"

"I own it."

"But came here again to-night to steal a second time what you had stolen once?"

"That's true, too."

"But I interrupted you—"

"Pardon, *madame*—not you, but my better self. I came to steal—I could not."

"*Monsieur*—you do not convince. I fail to fathom your motives, but—"

A sudden shock of heavy feet trampling the parquetry of the reception-hall, accompanied by a clash of violently excited voices, silenced her and brought Lanyard instantly to the face-about.

Above that loud wrangle—of which neither had received the least warning, so completely had their argument absorbed them—Sidonie's accents were audible, clear against the grumble of two voices of heavier timbre—"*Madame—madame!*"—a cry of protest.

"What is it?" Mme. Omber demanded of Lanyard.

He uttered the word, "Police!" as he turned and threw himself into the recess of the window.

But on wrenching it open the voice of an invisible picket, posted on the lawn, saluted him with a harsh warning; and when, involuntarily, he stepped out upon the balcony, a flash of flame split the gloom below, a report rang loud in the quiet of the park, and a bullet slapped viciously the stone facing at one side of the window.

CHAPTER XXIV

MANY THINGS HAPPEN FAST

INCONTINENTLY — with as little ceremony as though the bullet had lodged in himself—Lanyard tumbled backward into the room, while to a tune of heavy boots clattering through the salons, two *sergents de ville* lumbered valiantly into the library and pulled up at sight of Mme. Omber, erect and composed beside her safe, and of Lanyard picking himself up from the floor by the open window.

Behind them Sidonie trotted, wringing her hands.

"*Madame!*" she bleated — "they wouldn't listen to me, *madame*—I couldn't stop them!"

"All right, Sidonie. Go back to the hall. I'll call you when I need you. Good morning, *messieurs!*"

One *sergent* advanced with a halting salute and a superfluous question: "Mme. Omber—" But the other waited on the threshold, barring the way.

Lanyard measured the two speculatively—the spokesman was old and fat, ripe for pensioning, little apt to prove seriously effective in a rough-and-tumble, but the second was young, sturdy, and broad-chested, with the poise of an athlete. Furthermore, he carried, in addition to his sword, a pistol naked in his hand. And his clear blue eyes, meeting the adventurer's, lit up with a glimmer of invitation.

For the present, however, Lanyard wasn't taking any. He met that challenge with a look of blank non-comprehension, folded his arms, lounged against the desk, and watched Mme. Omber acknowledge, none too cordially, the *sergent's* query.

"I am Mme. Omber—yes. What can I do for you?"

The *sergent* gaped.

"Pardon!" he stammered, then laughed as one who tardily appreciates a joke. "It is well we are here in time, *madame*," he added—"though it would seem you have not had great trouble with this miscreant. Where is the woman?"

He moved a pace toward Lanyard—handcuffs jingled in his grasp.

"A moment, if you please!" *madame* interposed. "Woman? What woman?"

Pausing, the *sergent* explained in a tone of surprise:

"His accomplice, naturally! Such were our instructions — to proceed at once to *madame's* home, enter quietly by way of the servants' entrance—which would be open—and arrest a burglar with his female accomplice."

Again the stout *sergent* moved toward Lanyard; again Mme. Omber stopped him.

"One moment, if you please!"

Her eyes, dense with mystification and suspicion, questioned Lanyard's, who, with a significant nod toward the jewel-case still in her hands, gave her a look of dumb entreaty.

After brief hesitation, "It is a mistake," *madame* declared; "there is no woman in this house that I know of who has no right to be here. But you say you received a message? I sent none!"

The fat *sergent* shrugged. "That is not for me to dispute, *madame*. I have only my information to go by."

He glared sullenly at Lanyard, who returned a placid smile which, despite what little hope was to be derived from *madame's* irresolute manner, masked a vast amount of trepidation. He felt tolerably sure Mme. Omber had not summoned the police on prior knowledge of his presence in the library. This meant, then, a new form of attack on the part of the Pack. He must certainly have been followed—or else the girl had been caught attempting to steal away and the information extracted from her by *force majeure*. Moreover, he could hear two more pairs of feet tramping through the salons.

Pending the introduction of these last, Mme. Omber said nothing more.

And, unceremoniously enough, the newcomers shouldered their way into the library—two men in citizen's clothing—one pompous body of otherwise undistinguished appearance, promptly identified by the *sergents de ville* as the *commissaire* of that quarter, the other, a puffy mediocrity, known to Lanyard at least (if no one else seemed to recognize him) as Popinot.

At this confirmation of his darkest fears the adventurer abandoned hope of any aid from Mme. Omber and began to take unostentatious stock of his chances of escaping by his own efforts.

But he was altogether unarmed, thanks to his precipitate action in drawing the teeth of *madame's* revolver, and the odds were heavy—four against one, all four no doubt under arms, and two at least—the *sergents de ville*—men of sound military training.

" Mme. Omber?" inquired the *commissaire,* saluting that lady with immense dignity. " One trusts that this intrusion may be pardoned, the circumstances remembered. In an affair of this nature, involving this repository of so historic treasures—"

" That is quite well understood, *monsieur le commissaire,"* *madame* replied distantly. " And this *monsieur* is, no doubt, your aid?"

" Pardon!" *Monsieur le commissaire* hastened to make his companion known: " M. Popinot, *agent de la sûreté,* who lays these informations."

With a profound obeisance to Mme. Omber, Popinot strode dramatically over to face Lanyard and explore his lineaments with his small, keen, shifty eyes of a pig — a scrutiny which the adventurer suffered with superficial imperturbability.

" It is he!" Popinot announced with a gesture. " *Messieurs,* I call upon you to arrest this man, M. Michael Lanyard, self-styled the Lone Wolf."

He stepped back a pace, expanding his chest in a vain effort to eclipse his abdomen, and glanced round triumphantly at his respectful auditors.

" Accused," he added with intense relish, " of the murder of Inspector Roddy, of Scotland Yard, at Troyon's, and of setting fire to that establishment—"

" For this, Popinot," Lanyard interrupted in an undertone, " I shall some time cut off your ears!" He turned to Mme. Omber: " Accept, if you please, *madame,* my sincere regrets—but this accusation happens to be one of which I am altogether innocent."

Instantly, from his passive pose, Lanyard straightened up, and the heavy brass and mahogany humidor whereon his right hand had been resting seemed fairly to leap from its place on the desk as, with a sweep of his arm, he sent it spinning pointblank at the younger *sergent.*

Before that one, wholly unprepared, could more than gasp, it caught him a blow like a kick just below the breastbone. He reeled, and the breath left him in one mighty gust; he sat down abruptly—blue eyes wide with a look of aggrieved surprise—clapped both hands to his middle, blinked, turned pale, and keeled over on his side.

But Lanyard hadn't waited to note results. He was too busy. The fat *sergent,* with a snarl, had leaped upon his arm and was struggling to hold it still long enough to snap a handcuff round the wrist, while the *commissaire* had started with a bellow of rage and two hands extended, itching, for the adventurer's throat.

The first received a half-arm jab on the point of his chin that jarred his teeth, and without in the least understanding how it happened, found himself being whirled around and laid prostrate in the *commissaire's* path. The latter tripped, fell, and planted two hard knees, with the bulk of his weight atop them, on the zenith of the *sergent's* rotundity.

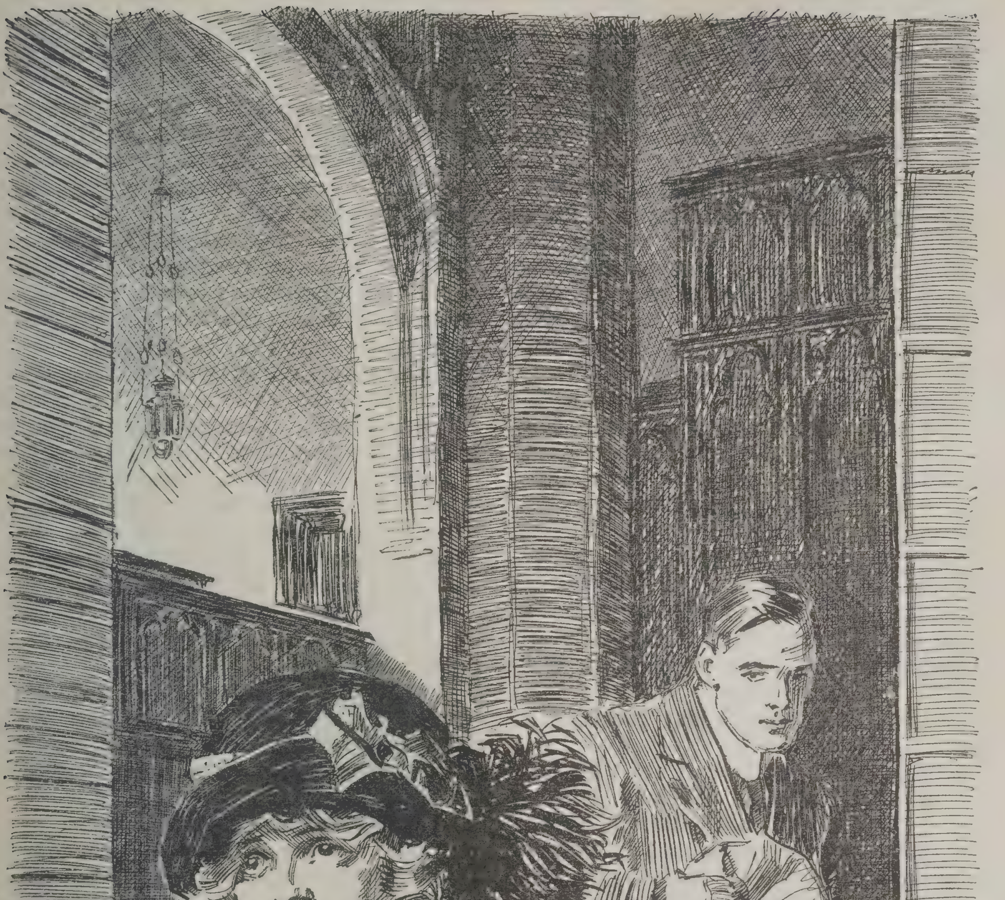
At the same time Lanyard, leaping toward the doorway, noticed that Popinot was tugging at a revolver in his hip-pocket.

Followed a vivid flash, then complete darkness; with a well-aimed kick — an elementary movement of *la savate*—Lanyard had dislodged the light-switch, knocking its porcelain box from the wall, thus breaking the connection and causing a short circuit which extinguished every light in the house.

With his way thus apparently cleared, the police in confusion, darkness abetting him, Lanyard plunged on; but in midstride, as he crossed the threshold, his ankle was caught and jerked from under him by the still prostrate younger *sergent.*

His momentum took him to the floor with a crash—and may have spared him a worse mishap, for in the same breath he heard the report of a pistol and knew that Popinot had fired at his fugitive shadow.

As he brought one heel down with crushing force on the *sergent's* wrist, freeing his foot, he was dimly conscious of the voice of the *commissaire* shouting a frantic prayer to Popinot to cease firing in the dark. Then the pain-maddened *sergent*



IN THE LUMINOUS HEART OF THE CATHEDRAL HE FOUND HER KNEELING crawled to his knees, lunged blindly forward, knocked the adventurer back in the act of rising, and fell on top of him.

Hampered by two hundred pounds of fighting Frenchman, Lanyard felt that the cause was lost, yet battled on—and would while breath was in him.

With a heave, a twist, and a squirm he slipped from under, and swinging a fist at random, hurt his knuckles against the mouth of the *sergent*. Momentarily the latter relaxed his hold, and Lanyard struggled to his knees, only to go down as the indomitable *sergent* grappled a second time.

Now, however, as they fell, Lanyard was on top, and transferring both hands to his antagonist's left forearm, he wrenched it up and around. There was a cry of pain, and he jumped clear of one no longer to be reckoned with.

Nevertheless, as he had feared, the delay caused by the struggle had proved ruinous. He had only found his feet when some one unknown hurled himself bodily through the gloom and wrapped his arms round Lanyard's thighs. And as both went down, two other bodies piled up on top.

For the next minute or two Lanyard fought blindly, madly, viciously, striking and kicking at random. For all that—even with one *sergent hors de combat*—they were three to one; and though with the ferocity of sheer desperation he shook them all off, at one time, and gained a few yards more, it was only again to be overcome and borne down, crushed beneath the weight of the three.

His wind was going, his strength leaving him. He mustered up every ounce of energy, all his wit and courage, for one final effort; fought like a cat, tooth and nail; toiled once more to his knees, with two antagonists clinging to him like wolves to the flanks of a stag; shook one off, regained his feet, swayed; and in one final flash of ferocity dashed both fists repeatedly into the face of him who still clung to him.

That one was Popinot; he knew instinctively that this was so, and a fierce joy filled him as he felt the man's clutches relax and fall away and guessed how brutal was the damage he had done that fat, foul countenance.

Then, free, he made off, running, stumbling, reeling, gained the reception-hall, flung open the door, and heedless of the picket who had fired at him from below the window, threw himself bodily down the steps and away.

Three shots sped him through that intricate tangle of the night-bound park. But all flew wide; and the pursuit—what little there was—blundered off at haphazard and lost itself.

He came to the wall, crept along in shelter of its deeper shadow until he found a tree with a low-swung branch that jutted out over the street, climbed this, edged outward, and dropped to the sidewalk.

A shout from the direction of the nearest gate greeted his appearance. He turned and dashed off. Running feet for a time pursued him, and once he heard the rumble of a motor. But he recovered quickly, regained his wind, and ran well, with long, steady, ground-consuming strides, and doubled, turned, and twisted in a manner to wake the envy of the most subtle fox.

The pursuit failed once more. In time he felt warranted in slowing down to a rapid walk.

Weariness was now a heavy burden upon him, and his spirit numbed with desperate desire for rest; but his pace did not flag nor his purpose falter from its goal.

It was a long walk to which he set himself and, as soon as he felt confident of freedom from espionage, a direct one. He plodded without faltering to the one place where he could feel sure of finding his beloved, if she lived and were free. He knew that she had not forgotten, and in his heart he knew that she would never again of her own will fail him.

Nor had she, when — weary and spent from that heart-breaking climb up the merciless acclivity of the Butte Montmartre—he staggered rather than walked past the sleepy verger and found his way through the crowding shadows to the softly luminous heart of the cathedral of the Sacré-Cœur, and found her kneeling, her head bent upon hands resting across the back of the little chair before her, a slight and timid figure lost and lonely in the long ranks of empty chairs that filled the body of the nave.

Slowly, almost fearfully, he went to her, and silently slipped into the chair by her side.

She knew, without looking up, that it was he.

After a little her hand stole out to his, closed round his fingers, and drew him forward with a gentle, insistent pressure. He knelt then with her, hand in hand—filled with the wonder of it, that he to whom religion had been nothing should have been brought to this by the magic of a woman's love.

He knelt for a long time, for many minutes, his somber gaze questioning the golden shadows and the ancient mystery of the farther choir and distant shining altar—and there was no more doubt in his heart but that, whatever should ensue of this, the restless spirit of the Lone Wolf was laid at last.

But in time he remembered how urgent was their plight; and remembering, found courage to break in upon her devotions.

"We must go," he said gently. "We haven't much time, and we must be out of Paris before dawn if we're to live to see another sundown. I think that will be all right—I've a standing arrangement with the minister of war."

She rose quietly, with a serenely radiant face.

"I knew you would be here," he said slowly—"I knew it well."

"I knew you would come here for me," she told him in turn—"I knew you must. I was praying that you might be spared to me, my dearest."

CHAPTER XXV

WINGS OF THE MORNING

About half past six Lanyard left the dressing-room assigned him in the barracks at Port Aviation and, waddling quaintly in the heavy wind-proof garments provided at the instance of Ducroy, made his way between two hangers to the practise field.

Now the eastern skies were pulsing fitfully with promise of dawn; but within the vast enclosure of the aerodome the gloom of night lingered so stubbornly that two huge search-lights had been pressed into the service of those engaged in tuning up the motor of the Parrott biplane.

In their intense, white, concentrated glare—that rippled oddly upon the wrinkled, oily garments of the dozen or so mechanics busy about the machine—the under sides of those wide, motionless planes hung against the dark with an effect of impermanence—as though they were already afloat and needed but a breath to send them winging skyward.

At one side a number of young and keen-faced Frenchmen, officers of the corps, were lounging, overlooking the preparations with alert and intelligent interest.

On the other, all the majesty of Mars was incarnate in the rotund person of M. Ducroy, posing valiantly in fur-lined coat and shining top-hat while he chatted with an officer of tall, athletic figure who wore an air of uncommon efficiency together with his aviating uniform.

As Lanyard drew near, this man brought his heels together smartly, saluted the minister of war, and strode off toward the flying-machine.

"Captain Vauquelin informs me he will be ready to start in five minutes, *monsieur*," Ducroy announced. "You are just in time."

"And *mademoiselle?*" the adventurer asked, peering anxiously round.

Almost immediately the girl came forward from the shadows with a smile apologetic for the strangeness of her attire.

She had donned, over her street dress, an ample leather garment which enveloped her completely and buttoned tight round wrists and ankles. Her small hat, too, had been replaced by a leather helmet-cap which left only her eyes, nose, mouth, and chin exposed, and even these were soon to be hidden by a heavy veil for protection against spattering oil.

"*Mademoiselle* is not nervous—eh?" Ducroy inquired politely.

Lucy smiled brightly.

"I? Why should I be, *monsieur?*"

"I trust *mademoiselle* will permit me to commend her courage. Pardon! I have one last word for the ear of Captain Vauquelin."

Lifting his hat, the Frenchman joined the group near the machine.

Lanyard stared unaffectedly at the girl's face, unable to disguise his wonder at the high spirits advertised by her rekindled color and brilliant eyes.

"Well?" she demanded gaily. "Don't tell me I don't look like a fright! I know I do!"

"I daren't tell you how you look to me," Lanyard replied soberly. "But I will say this, that for sheer, downright pluck, you—"

"Thank you, *monsieur!* And you?"

He glanced with a deprecatory smile at the flimsy-looking contrivance to which they were presently to entrust their lives.

"Somehow," said he doubtfully, "I don't feel in the least upset or exhilarated. It seems little out of the average run of life—all in the day's work!"

"I think," she replied, "that you're very like the other lone wolf, the fictitious one—Lupin, you know—a bit of a humbug. If you're not nervous, why keep staring hither and yon—as if you were rather expecting somebody—as if you wouldn't be surprised to see Popinot or De Morbihan pop out of the ground—or Ekstrom!"

"Hum!" he said gravely, "I don't mind telling you now, that's precisely what I am afraid of."

"Nonsense!" the girl cried in open contempt. "What could they do?"

"Please don't ask me," Lanyard begged seriously. "I might try to tell you."

"But don't worry, please!" Fugitively her hand touched his arm. "We're ready."

It was true enough. Ducroy was moving toward them again.

"All is prepared!" he announced in sonorous accents.

In a sober silence they approached the machine.

Vauquelin kept himself aloof while Lanyard and a young officer helped the girl to a seat on the right of the pilot's and strapped her in. When the adventurer had been similarly secured in the place on the left the two sat, imprisoned, some six feet above the ground.

Lanyard found his perch comfortable enough. A broad band of webbing furnished support for his back, another crossed his chest by way of provision against forward pitching, there were rests for his feet, and cloth-wound grips fixed to struts on either side for his hands.

He smiled at Lucy across the empty seat, and was surprised at the clearness with which her answering smile was visible. But he wasn't to see it again for a long and weary time; almost immediately she began to adjust her veil.

The morning had grown much lighter within the last few minutes.

A wait ensued of seemingly interminable duration. A swarm of mechanics, assistants, and military aviators buzzed round their feet like bees.

The sky was now pale to the eastern horizon. A fleet of heavy clouds was drifting off into the south, leaving in their wake a thin veil of mist that bade fair soon to disappear before the rays of the sun. The atmosphere seemed tolerably clear and not unseasonably cold.

The light grew stronger still—features of distant objects defined themselves; traces of color warmed the winter landscape.

After some time their pilot, wearing his wind-mask, appeared and began to climb to his perch. With a cool nod for Lanyard and a civil bow to his woman passenger he settled himself, adjusted several levers, and flirted a gay hand to his brother officers.

There was a warning cry from the rear. The crowd dropped back rapidly to either side. Ducroy lifted his hat in parting salute, cried "*Bon voyage!*" and scuttled clear like a startled rooster before a motor-car. Thereupon the motor and propeller broke loose with a mighty roar comparable only, in Lanyard's fancy, to the chant of ten thousand riveting-locusts.

He felt momentarily as if his tympanums must burst with the incessant and tremendous concussions registered upon them; but presently this sensation passed, leaving him with that of permanent deafness.

Before he could recover and regain control of his startled wits the aviator had grasped a lever and the great fabric was in motion.

It swept down the field like a frightened swan; and the wheels of its chassis, registering every infinitesimal irregularity in the surface of the ground, magnified them all a hundredfold. It was like riding in a tumbrel driven at top speed over the Giant's Causeway. Lanyard was shaken violently to the very marrow of his bones; he believed that even his eyes must be rattling in their sockets.

Then the Parrott began to ascend. Singularly enough, this change was marked at first by no more than a slight lessening of the vibration—the machine seemed still to be dashing over a cobbled thoroughfare at breakneck speed; and Lanyard found it difficult to appreciate that they were afloat, even when he looked down and discovered a hundred feet of space between himself and the practise-field.

In another breath they were soaring over housetops.

Momentarily, now, the shocks became

less frequent. And presently they ceased almost altogether, to be repeated only at rare intervals, when the drift of air opposing the planes developed irregularities in its velocity. There succeeded, in contrast, the sublimest peace; even the roaring of the propeller dwindled to the negligible status of a sustained drone; the Parrott seemed to float without an effort upon a vast, still sea, flawed only occasionally by inconsiderable ripples.

Still rising, they surprised the earliest rays of the sun; and in their virgin light the aeroplane was transformed into a thing of gossamer gold.

Continually the air buffeted their faces like a flood of icy water.

Below, the scroll of the world unrolled like some vast and intricately illuminated missal, or like some strange mosaic, marvelously minute.

Lanyard could see the dial of the compass, fixed to a strut on the pilot's left. By that telltale their course lay nearly due northeast. Already the weltering roofs of Paris were in sight to the right, the Eiffel Tower soaring from them like a fairy pillar of fine gold lace-work, the Seine looping the cluttered acres like a sleek brown snake.

Versailles broke the horizon to port and slipped astern. Paris closed up, telescoped its panorama, became a mere blur, a smoky smudge.

But it was long before the distance eclipsed that admonitory finger of the Eiffel.

Vauquelin manipulating the levers, the plane tilted its nose and swam higher and yet higher. The song of the motor dropped an octave to a richer tone. The speed was sensibly increased.

Lanyard contemplated with untempered wonder the fact of his equanimity—there seemed nothing at all strange in this extraordinary experience; he was by no means excited, remained merely deeply interested. And he could detect in his physical sensations no trace of that qualmish dread he had always associated with high places — the sense he now experienced of security, of solidity, ever afterward remained wholly unaccountable in his understanding.

Of a sudden, surprised by a touch on his arm, he turned to meet through the mica windows of the wind-mask the eyes of the aviator, informed with an expression of importunate doubt, quite illegible. Assailed by sickening fear lest something was going wrong with the machine, Lanyard shook his head to indicate want of comprehension. Then, with an impatient gesture, the aviator pointed downward.

Appreciating the fact that speech was impossible, Lanyard clutched the struts and bent forward. But the pace was now so fast and their elevation so great that the landscape swimming beneath his vision was no more than a brownish plain fugitively maculated with blots of contrasting color.

He look up blankly, but only to be treated to the same gesture.

Piqued, he concentrated attention more closely upon the flat, streaming landscape. And suddenly he recognized something oddly familiar in the bend of the Seine that was approaching.

"St.-Germain-en-Laye!" he exclaimed with a start of alarm.

This was the danger point.

"And over there," he reminded himself —"to the left—that wide field with a queer white thing in the middle that looks like a winged grub—that must be De Morbihan's aerodome and his Valkyr monoplane! Are they bringing it out? Is that what Vauquelin means? And if so—what of it? I don't see."

A sudden doubt and wonder chilled the adventurer.

Temporarily, Vauquelin returned entire attention to the management of the biplane. The wind was now blowing more fitfully, creating pockets—those "holes in the air" so dreaded by cloud-pilots—and in quest of a more constant resistance the aviator was swinging his craft in a wide northerly curve, climbing ever higher and more high.

The earth soon lost all semblance of design; even the twisted silver wire of the Seine vanished far on the left; remained only the effect of firm suspension in that high, blue vault, of a continuous flow of iced water on the face, together with the tuneless chant of the motor.

After some forty minutes more of this—it may have been an hour, for time was then an incalculable thing—Lanyard, in a mood of abnormal sensitiveness, began to divine some little disquiet in the mind of the aviator, and stared until he caught his eye.

"What is it?" he screamed to the other

in futile effort to lift his voice above the din.

But the Frenchman understood, and responded with a sweep of his arm toward the horizon ahead. And seeing nothing but cloud in the quarter indicated, Lanyard began to grasp the nature of a phenomenon which, from the first, had been vaguely troubling him. The reason why he had been able to perceive no real rim to the world was that the earth was all asteam from the heavy rains of the last week; all the more remote distances were veiled with rising vapor. And now they were approaching the coast, to which, it seemed, the mists clung closest; for all the world before them slept beneath a blanket of dark gray.

Nor was it difficult now to understand why the aviator was ill at ease facing the prospect of navigating in a Channel fog.

Several minutes later he startled Lanyard with another peremptory touch on his arm, followed by a significant glance over his shoulder.

Lanyard turned hastily.

Behind them, at a distance which he calculated roughly as two miles, the silhouette of a monoplane hung against the brilliant firmament, resembling, with its single spread of wings, more a solitary, soaring gull than any man-directed mechanism.

Only an infrequent and almost imperceptible shifting of the wings proved that it was moving.

He watched it for several seconds, in deepening perplexity finding it impossible to guess whether the monoplane were gaining or losing in that long chase or who might be its pilot.

Yet Lanyard entertained little doubt that the pursuing machine had risen from the aerodome of Count Remy de Morbihan at St.-Germain-en-Laye; that it was nothing less, in fact, than De Morbihan's Valkyr monoplane, reputed the fastest in Europe and winner of a dozen international events; and that it was guided, if not by De Morbihan himself, by one of the creatures of the Pack — quite possibly, even more probably, by Ekstrom!

But—assuming all this—what evil could such pursuit portend? In what conceivable manner could the following pilot reckon to profit himself by overtaking or distancing the Parrott? He couldn't hinder the escape of Lanyard and Lucy Shannon to England in any way, by any means reasonably to be imagined.

Was this simply one more move to keep Lanyard under espionage? But that might more readily have been accomplished by telegraphing or telephoning the Pack's *confrères,* Wertheimer's associates in the English capital!

What else could the Pack have in mind?

Lanyard gave it up, admitting his inability to trump up any sane excuse for such conduct; but the riddle continued to fret his mind.

From the first, from that moment when Lucy's disappearance had required postponement of this flight, he had apprehended trouble; it hadn't seemed reasonable to hope that the Parrott could be held in waiting on his orders for many days without the secret leaking out; but it was trouble to develop before the start from Port Aviation that he had anticipated. The possibility that the Pack would be able to work any mischief to him after that had never entered his calculations. Even now he found it difficult to give it serious consideration.

Again he glanced back. Now, in his judgment, the monoplane loomed larger than before against the glowing sky, indicating that it was overtaking them.

Beneath his breath Lanyard swore from a heart brimming with disquiet.

The Parrott was capable of a speed of eighty miles an hour; and unquestionably Vauquelin was wheedling every ounce of power out of that willing motor. Since drawing Lanyard's attention to the pursuer he had contrived an appreciable acceleration.

But would even that pace serve to hold the Valkyr in its place, if not to distance it?

His next backward look reckoned the monoplane no nearer.

And another thirty minutes or so elapsed without the relative positions of the two flying-machines undergoing any perceptible change.

In the course of this period the Parrott rose to an altitude, indicated by the barograph at Lanyard's elbow, of over half a mile. Below the Channel fog spread itself out like a sea of milk, slowly churning.

Staring down in fascination, Lanyard told himself gravely:

" Blue water below that, my friend!"

It seemed difficult to credit the fact that they had covered the distance from Paris in so short a period of time.

By his reckoning—a very crude one—the Parrott was then somewhere off Dieppe—it ought to pick up England, in such case, not far from Brighton. If one could only see!

By bending forward a little and staring past the aviator Lanyard could catch a glimpse of Lucy Shannon.

Though all her beauty and grace of person were lost in the clumsy swaddlings of her makeshift costume, she seemed to be resting comfortably in her place; and the rushing air, keen with the chill of that great altitude, not only molded her wind-veil precisely to the exquisite contours of her face, but stung her firm cheeks until they glowed with a rare fire that even that thick, dark mesh enshrouding them could not wholly quench.

The sun crept above the floor of mist, played upon it with iridescent rays, shot it through and through with a warm, pulsating glow like that of a fire-opal, and suddenly turned it to a sea of fairy gold that, extending to the horizon, baffled every effort to surmise their position, whether they were above land or sea.

None the less, Lanyard's rough and rapid calculations persuaded him that they were then about mid-Channel.

He had no more than arrived at this conclusion when a sharp, startled movement that rocked the plane drew his attention to the man at his side.

Glancing in alarm at the aviator's face, he saw that it was as white as marble—what little of it was visible beyond and beneath the wind-mask.

Vauquelin was holding out an arm and staring at it incredulously; Lanyard's gaze focused upon the same spot — a ragged perforation in the sleeve of the leather surtout, just above the elbow.

"What is it?" he inquired stupidly, forgetting again that the other could not possibly hear him.

The eyes of the aviator, lifting from the perforation to meet Lanyard's stare, were clouded with consternation.

Then Vauquelin swerved quickly in his seat and looked back. Involuntarily he ducked his head. Simultaneously something slipped whining past Lanyard's cheek, touching his flesh with a touch more chill than that of the icy air itself.

"Damnation!" he shrieked, almost hysterically. "That madman in the Valkyr is firing at us!"

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FLYING DEATH

Steadying himself with a splendid display of self-control and downright courage, Captain Vauquelin concentrated upon the management of the biplane.

The drone of its motor thickened again, its speed became greater, and the machine began to rise still higher, tracing a long, graceful curve.

Lanyard glanced apprehensively toward the girl, but she continued in apparent unconsciousness that anything was happening out of the ordinary. Her profile still looked forward, and still the wind-veil trembled against her burning cheeks.

Thanks to the racket of the motor, no audible reports had accompanied the sharpshooting of the man in the monoplane, while Lanyard's cry of horror and dismay had been audible to himself exclusively. Hearing nothing, Lucy suspected nothing.

Again Lanyard looked back.

Now the Valkyr seemed to have crept up to within a quarter of a mile of the biplane, and was boring on at a tremendous pace, its single spread of wings on an approximate level with that of the upper plane of the Parrott.

But this last was rising steadily.

The driver's seat of the Valkyr was occupied by a muffled, burly figure that might be anybody — De Morbihan, Ekstrom, or any other homicidal maniac. At the distance its actions were as illegible as their results were unquestionable. Lanyard saw a little tongue of flame lick out from a point close beside the head of the figure—he couldn't distinguish the firearm itself—and, like Vauquelin, quite without premeditation, he ducked.

Simultaneously there sounded a harsh, ripping noise immediately above his head; and he found himself staring up at a long, ragged tear in the canvas of the plane, caused by a bullet striking it aslant.

"What's to be done?" he screamed passionately to Vauquelin.

But the aviator only shook his head; and they continued to ascend rapidly; already the web of gold that cloaked earth and sea seemed thrice as far beneath them as it had been at the moment when Vauquelin had made the appalling discovery of his bullet-punctured sleeve.

But the monoplane was doggedly following suit; as the Parrott rose, so did the Valkyr, if a trace more slowly and less readily.

Lanyard had read somewhere, or heard it said, that monoplanes were poor climbers.

He told himself that, if this were true, Vauquelin knew his business; and from this reflection drew what comfort he might.

And he was glad, very glad, of the dark wind-veil that shrouded his face, which he believed to show nothing less than panic terror.

He was, in sober fact, quite rigid with fright and horror. It were idle to argue that only unlikely chance would wing one of the bullets from the Valkyr to a vital point — there was the torn canvas overhead, there was that hole through Vauquelin's sleeve.

And then the barograph on the strut beside Lanyard disappeared as if by magic. He was aware of a slight jar; the framework of the biplane quivered as from a heavy blow; something that resembled a handful of black crumbs sprayed out into the air ahead and vanished — and where the instrument had been nothing remained but an iron clamp gripping the strut.

And even as any one of these bullets might have proved fatal, their first successor might incapacitate the aviator, if it did not slay him outright—in either case, inevitably the result would be death following a fall from a height, as recorded on the barograph dial the instant before its destruction, of over four thousand feet.

And they were still climbing.

Now the pursuer was losing some of the advantage of his superior speed; the Parrott was perceptibly higher; the Valkyr must needs mount in a more sweeping curve.

None the less, Lanyard, peering down, saw still another tongue of flame spit out at him; and two bullet-holes appeared in the port wings of the biplane, one in the lower, one in the upper spread of canvas.

White-lipped and trembling, the adventurer began to work at the fastenings of his surtout. After a moment he plucked off one of his gloves and cast it impatiently from him. Asprawl, it sailed down the wind like a wounded sparrow. He caught Vauquelin's eye upon him, quick with a curiosity which changed to a sudden gleam of comprehension when Lanyard, thrusting his hand under the leather coat, groped for his side pocket and produced an automatic pistol which Ducroy, learning that he was unarmed, had pressed upon him.

They were now perhaps a hundred feet higher than the Valkyr, which was soaring a quarter of a mile off to starboard. Under the guidance of the Frenchman, the Parrott swooped round in a narrow circle until it hung almost immediately above the other — a maneuver requiring, first and last, something more than five minutes to effect.

Meanwhile Lanyard rebuttoned his surtout and, clutching the pistol, tried hard not to think. But already his imagination was sick with the thought of what would ensue when the time came for him to carry out his intention.

Vauquelin touched his arm with urgent pressure; but Lanyard only shook his head, gulped, and without looking, surrendered the weapon to the aviator.

Bearing heavily against the chest-band, he commanded the broad, white spread of the Valkyr's back and wings. Invisible beneath these hung the motor and the driver's seat.

An instant more and he was aware that Vauquelin was bending forward over the edge of the plane.

Aiming with what deliberation was possible, the aviator emptied the clip of its eight cartridges in less than a minute.

The reports rang out against the drum of the motor with an accent as vicious as the cracking of a blacksnake whip.

Momentarily, Lanyard doubted if a single bullet had taken effect. He could not, with his swimming vision, detect any sign of damage in the canvas of the Valkyr.

He saw the empty automatic slip from Vauquelin's numb and nerveless fingers, and vanish.

A frightful fascination kept his gaze constant to the soaring Valkyr. Beyond it, down, deep down, a mile of emptiness, was that golden floor of tumbled cloud, waiting.

He saw the monoplane halt abruptly in its strong onward surge—as if it had run, full tilt, head on against an invisible obstacle—and for what seemed a round minute, it hung so, veering and wabbling, muzzling the wind. Then, like a sounding whale, it turned and dived headlong, propeller spinning like a top.

Down through an eighth of a mile of space it plunged plummetlike; then, perhaps caught in a flaw of wind, it turned sidewise and began to revolve, at first slowly, but with increasing rapidity in its fatally swift descent.

Toward the beginning of its revolutions something was thrown off, something small, dark, and sprawling—like that glove which Lanyard had discarded. But this object dropped with a speed even greater than that of the Valkyr; in a brace of seconds had diminished to the proportions of a gnat; in another was engulfed in that vast sea of golden vapor.

The monoplane itself, scarcely less precipitate, spun down through the abyss and plunged to oblivion in the fog-wrack.

And Lanyard was still hanging against the chest-band, limp and spent and trying not to give way to deadly sickness when, of a sudden and without any warning whatever, the stentorian chant of the motor ceased and was blotted out by that immense silence of those vast solitudes of the upper air, where never a sound is heard save the voices of the elements at war among themselves — a silence that rang with an accent as dreadful as if it were the very crack of doom.

And, its propeller no longer gripping the air, the aeroplane drifted on at ever-lessening speed, until at length it had no way whatever, and rested without motion of any sort, as it might have been in the cup of some mighty and invisible hand.

Then, with a little shudder of hesitation, the planes dipped forward—inclined slightly earthward—and began slowly, and at first, as if reluctantly, to slip down the long and empty channels of the air.

At this, rousing, Lanyard became aware of his own voice yammering wildly at Vauquelin:

"Good God, man! Why did you do that?"

Vauquelin answered only with a pale grimace and a barely perceptible shrug.

Momentarily gathering momentum, the biplane sped downward with a resistless rush, with the speed of a great wind, with a speed so great that when Lanyard again attempted speech the breath was whipped from his lips and he could utter no sound.

Thus from that awful height, from the still heart of that immeasurable void, they swept down and ever down in a long series of sickening swoops, broken by pauses of negligible duration. And though they approached it on a long slant, the floor of vapor rose to meet them with the rapidity of a mighty rushing wave; and in a trice the biplane was hovering an instant before plunging on down into its cold, gray heart.

In that flash of hesitation, while still the adventurer gasped for breath and pawed at his streaming eyes with an aching hand, pierced through and through with cold, the fog showed itself as something less substantial than it had seemed; blurs of color peered through its folds of gauze, and with these the rounded summit of a brownish knoll.

Then they lunged on, down out of the bleak, bright sunshine into the cool twilight depths of clinging vapors; and the good green earth lifted its warm bosom to receive them.

Tilting its nose a trifle, fluttering as though undecided, the Parrott settled gracefully, with scarcely a jar, upon a wide sweep of untilled land covered with short, coarse grass.

For some time the three remained in their perches like petrified things, quite moveless, and—with the possible exception of the aviator—hardly conscious.

But presently Lanyard became aware that he was regularly filling his lungs with air, sweet, damp, wholesome, and, by comparison, warm, and that the blood was tingling painfully in his half-frozen hands and feet.

He sighed as one waking from a strange dream and looked round.

At the same time the aviator bestirred himself and began a bit stiffly to climb down from his place.

Feeling the earth beneath his feet, he took a step or two away from the machine, reeling and stumbling like a drunken man, then turned back.

"Come, my friend!" he urged Lanyard in a voice of strangely normal intonation —"look alive—if you're able—and lend me a hand with *mademoiselle*. I'm afraid she has fainted."

And, in fact, the girl was reclining inertly in the bands of webbing, her eyes closed, her mouth ajar, her limbs slackened.

"Small blame to her!" Lanyard commented, fumbling clumsily with the chest-band. "That dive was enough to drive a body mad!"

"But I had to do it!" the aviator protested earnestly. "I dared not remain longer up there. I have never before been afraid in the air, but after—after *that* I was terribly afraid. I could feel myself going—taking leave of my senses—and I knew I must act if we were not to follow that other. God! what a death!"

He paused, shuddered, and drew the back of his hand across his eyes before continuing: "So I cut off the ignition and volplaned. Here — my hand. So-o! All right, eh?"

FOR SOME TIME LANYARD AND LUCY SHANNON REMAINED MOTIONLESS LISTENING—

"Oh, I'm all right," Lanyard insisted confidently.

But his confidence was belied by a look of daze, for the earth was billowing and reeling round him as though bewitched; and before he knew what had happened he had sat down hard and was staring foolishly up at the aviator.

"Here!" said the latter courteously, his wind-mask hiding a smile—"my hand again, *monsieur*. And now for *mademoiselle*."

But when they approached the girl, she surprised both by shivering, sitting up, and obviously pulling herself together.

"You feel better now, *mademoiselle?*" the aviator inquired, hastening to free her from her fastenings.

"I'm better—yes, thank you," she admitted in a small, broken voice—"but not yet quite myself."

She gave a hand to the aviator, the other to Lanyard, and as they helped her to the ground Lanyard, warned by his experience, stood by with a ready arm.

She needed that support, and for a few minutes didn't seem even conscious of it. Then, gently disengaging herself, she moved a foot or two away.

"Where are we—do you know?"

"On the South Downs somewhere?" Lanyard suggested, consulting Vauquelin.

"That is probable," this last affirmed—"at all events, reckoning by the course I held. Somewhere well in from the coast, at a venture, for I do not hear the sea."

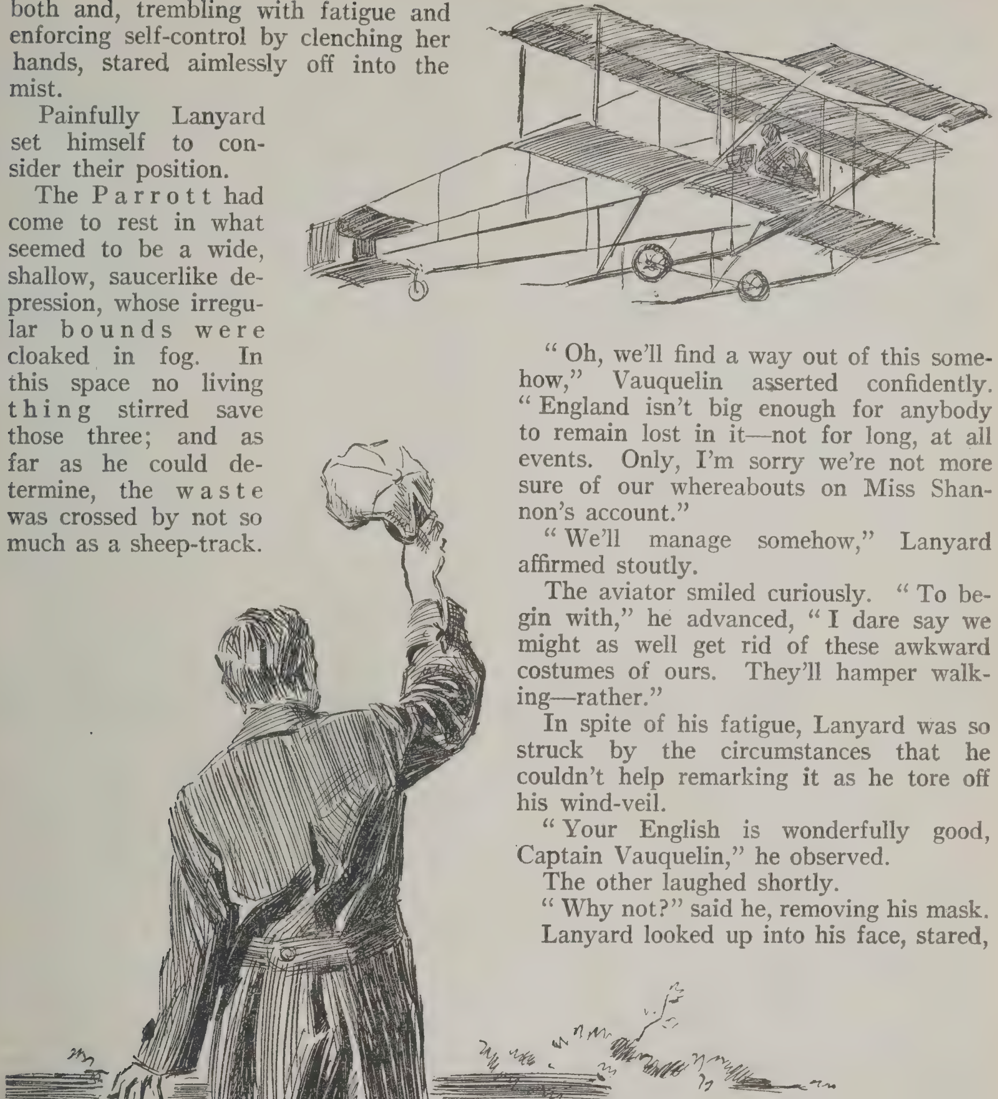
"Near Lewes, perhaps?"

"I have no reason to doubt it."

An odd, constrained pause ensued. The girl looked from the aviator to Lanyard, then at neither—turned a trifle away from both and, trembling with fatigue and enforcing self-control by clenching her hands, stared aimlessly off into the mist.

Painfully Lanyard set himself to consider their position.

The Parrott had come to rest in what seemed to be a wide, shallow, saucerlike depression, whose irregular bounds were cloaked in fog. In this space no living thing stirred save those three; and as far as he could determine, the waste was crossed by not so much as a sheep-track. In brief, they were lost. There might be a road running past the saucer ten yards from its brim in any quarter. There might not. Possibly there was a town or village immediately adjacent. Quite as possibly the downs billowed away for miles on either hand, desolate, uninhabited. From where they were there was no means of telling.



—TO THE DRONE THAT PRESENTLY DWINDLED TO A MERE THREAD OF SOUND

"Well—what do we do now?" the girl demanded suddenly in a nervous voice.

"Oh, we'll find a way out of this somehow," Vauquelin asserted confidently. "England isn't big enough for anybody to remain lost in it—not for long, at all events. Only, I'm sorry we're not more sure of our whereabouts on Miss Shannon's account."

"We'll manage somehow," Lanyard affirmed stoutly.

The aviator smiled curiously. "To begin with," he advanced, "I dare say we might as well get rid of these awkward costumes of ours. They'll hamper walking—rather."

In spite of his fatigue, Lanyard was so struck by the circumstances that he couldn't help remarking it as he tore off his wind-veil.

"Your English is wonderfully good, Captain Vauquelin," he observed.

The other laughed shortly.

"Why not?" said he, removing his mask.

Lanyard looked up into his face, stared, gasped, and fell back a pace. "Wertheimer!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE HOLLOW IN THE DOWNS

The Englishman smiled cheerfully in response to Lanyard's cry of astonishment.

"In effect," he observed, stripping off his gauntlets, "you're right, Mr. Lanyard.

'Wertheimer' isn't my name, but it is so closely identified with my — ah — insinuative personality as to warrant the misapprehension. I sha'n't demand an apology so long as you permit me to preserve an incognito which may yet prove somewhat useful."

"Incognito!" Lanyard stammered, completely discountenanced. "Useful!"

"You have my meaning exactly; although my work in Paris is now ended, there's no saying when it mightn't be convenient to be able to go back without establishing a new identity."

Before Lanyard replied to this the look of wonder in his eyes had yielded to one of understanding.

"Scotland Yard, eh?" he queried curtly.

Wertheimer bowed. "Special agent," he added.

"I might have guessed, if I hadn't the wit of the domestic goose!" Lanyard affirmed bitterly. "But I must admit—"

"Yes," the Englishman assented pleasantly; "I did pull your leg—didn't I? But no more than the limbs of our other friends. Of course, it's taken some time. I had to establish myself firmly over here as a shining light of the swell mob before De Morbihan would take me to his hospitable bosom."

"And—I presume I'm under arrest?"

With a laugh the Englishman shook his head vigorously.

"No, thank you!" he declared. "I've had too convincing proof of your distaste for interference in your affairs. You fight too sincerely, Mr. Lanyard—and I'm as tired a sleuth this very morning as ever was! I'll need a week's rest to fit me to cope with the task of taking you into custody—a week and some very able-bodied assistance! But," he amended with graver countenance, "I will say this: if you're in England a week hence, I'll be tempted to undertake the job on general principles. I don't in the least question the sincerity of your intention to behave yourself hereafter; but as a servant of the king, it's my duty to advise you that England would prefer you to start life anew—as they say—in another country. Several steamers will be sailing for the States before the end of the week—further details I leave entirely to your discretion. But go you must," he concluded firmly.

"I understand—" said Lanyard; and would have said more, but couldn't. There was something suspiciously like a mist before his eyes.

Avoiding the faces of his sweetheart and the Englishman, he turned aside, put forth a hand blindly to a wing of the biplane to steady himself, and stood with head bowed and limbs trembling.

Moving quietly to his side, the girl took his other hand and held it tight.

Presently Lanyard shook himself impatiently and lifted his head again.

"Sorry," he said apologetic—"but your generosity — when I looked for nothing better than arrest—was a bit too much for my nerves!"

"Nonsense!" the Englishman commented with brusk good humor. "We're all upset. A drop of brandy'll do us no end of good."

Unbuttoning his leather surtout, he produced a flask from one of the inner pockets, filled its metal cup, and offered it to the girl.

"You first, if you please, Miss Shannon. No—I insist. You positively need it."

She allowed herself to be persuaded, drank, coughed, gasped, and returned the cup, which Wertheimer promptly refilled and passed to Lanyard.

The raw spirits stung like fire, but proved an instant aid to the badly jangled nerves of the adventurer. In another moment he was much more himself.

Drinking in turn, Wertheimer put away the flask. "That's better!" he commented. "Now I shall be able to cut along with this blessed machine without fretting over the fate of Ekstrom. But till now I haven't been able to forget—"

He paused and drew a hand across his eyes.

"It was, then, Ekstrom—you think?" Lanyard demanded.

"Unquestionably! De Morbihan had learned—I know—of your bargain with Ducroy; and I know, too, that he and Ekstrom spent each morning in the hangars at St.-Germain-en-Laye after your sensational escape. It never entered my head, of course, that they had any such insane scheme brewing as that — else I would never have so giddily arranged with Ducroy—through the *sûreté,* of course—to take Vauquelin's place. Besides, who else could it have been? Not De Morbihan, for he's crippled for life, thanks to that affair in the Bois; not Popinot, who was on his way to the Santé, last I saw of him; and never Bannon—he was dead before I left Paris for Port Aviation."

"Dead!"

"Oh, quite!" the Englishman affirmed nonchalantly. "When we arrested him at three this morning — charged with complicity in the murder of Roddy—he flew into a passion that brought on a fatal hemorrhage. He died within ten minutes."

There was a little silence.

"I may tell you, Mr. Lanyard," the Englishman resumed, looking up from the motor, to which he was paying attention with monkey-wrench and oil-can, "that you were quite mistaken when you ridiculed the idea of the 'International Underworld, Unlimited.' Of course, if you *hadn't* laughed, I shouldn't feel quite as much respect for you as I do; in fact, the chances are you'd be in handcuffs—or a cell in the Santé—this very minute. But, absurd as it sounded—and was—the 'Underworld' project was a pet hobby of Bannon's—who'd been the brains of a gang of criminals in New York for many years. He was a bit touched on the subject. A monomaniac, if you ask me. And his enthusiasm won De Morbihan and Popinot over—and me! He took a wonderful fancy to me, Bannon did; I really was appointed first lieutenant in Greggs's stead. Nothing he wouldn't tell me. I even got him to tell me about you—why he was so uncommon vindictive. Do you wish to know?"

"If you please."

"It seems Bannon was the chap who kidnaped and abandoned you at Troyon's. Your mother had been his wife, but left him for cause—divorced him—and married again in England. You were the child of her second marriage. Bannon managed to ruin your father—drove him into bankruptcy and to suicide—and the shock of that, coupled with your disappearance, killed your mother. But even that wasn't enough for Bannon; and when he found you'd grown up to be the Lone Wolf, he signed your death-warrant then and there. Only you declined to be executed. Your family name—"

"Forgive me," Lanyard interposed hastily; "but I don't care to know my family name. If I have no parents living, I've no kin who would welcome my return. And if I had—I prefer to prove myself before I hunt them up. Some day, perhaps, I may apply to you for more information. But for the present, I'm content—and grateful."

"I think," said Wertheimer, restoring the oil-can to its place in the tool-kit, "you're very wise. In fact, my personal feeling for you is one of growing esteem, if you'll permit me to say so. You've most of the makings of a man. Will you shake hands—with a copper's nark?"

He gave Lanyard's hand a firm and friendly grasp and turned to the girl.

"Good-by, Miss Shannon. I'm truly grateful for the assistance you gave us. Without you, we'd have been sadly handicapped. And now it's good-by and good luck. I hope you may be happy. I'm sure you can't go far without coming across a highroad or a village; but — for reasons not unconnected with my professional pursuits — I prefer to remain in ignorance of the way you go."

Releasing her hand, he stepped back, saluted the lovers with a smile and gay gesture, and clambered briskly to the pilot's seat of the biplane.

When firmly established, he turned the switch of the starting mechanism.

The heavy, distinctive hum of the great motor filled that isolated hollow in the downs with a sound like the purring of a dynamo.

With a final wave of his hand, Wertheimer grasped the starting-lever.

Its brool deepening, the Parrott stirred, shot forward abruptly. In two seconds it was fifty yards distant, its silhouette already blurred, its wheels lifting from the rim of the hollow.

Then lightly it rose and soared, parted the mists, vanished.

For some time Lanyard and Lucy Shannon remained motionless, clinging together, hand in hand, their faces upturned, as if expecting its reappearance, listening to the drone that presently dwindled to a mere thread of sound and died out altogether in the obscurity above them.

Then, turning, they faced each other, smiling uncertainly, a smile that said: "So all that is finished! Or, perhaps, we have dreamed it!"

Suddenly, with a low cry, the girl gave herself to Lanyard's arms; and as this happened the mists parted and bright sunlight flooded the hollow in the downs.

After a little, taking her lips away, the girl rested her head on his shoulder and sighed a little sigh, a soft sigh of content.

"If we hurry," she said then, "it's possible that we may win to London yet, before it's too late."

"Too late—"

"To get a special license—or whatever it is one must get before one may marry in haste in England. Don't *you* know?"

He shook his head, laughed, and caught her more closely to him.

"No," he confessed; "I don't know. I haven't had much experience. But we can ask a policeman. Who's afraid?"

THE END

NEXT MONTH'S NOVEL

In the April issue we shall give you a very
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The scene is laid in Canada, in one of those wonderful valleys where peak and pine merge with the rippling grain, and rivers wed the meadows. It is a story of big impulses, ennobling love, splendid sacrifices, and immortal deeds. Only upon an outdoor canvas could Sir Gilbert have painted this heroic romance—redolent of the spring, boisterous with the high winds, soft as the voices of summer-time, rippling as the brook on the hillside. It is called

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"WE ARE BEING FOLLOWED," SHE WHISPERED. "A MAN IS TRAILING US NOW"

Drawn by W. B. King

[See short story, "The Disappearance of Monsieur Dupoy"]

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THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT THAT CASHES IN

BY EDWARD HUNGERFORD

IF you want to see the feminist movement in America at its full worth you do not have to crowd into Carnegie Hall or Madison Square Garden to hear some suffragist orator of more or less repute discuss the progress of the "Votes for Women" campaign. It would be better for you to stand at the intersection of New York's main thoroughfares with any of its crowded cross streets and see the feminist movement hurrying homeward at the end of a strenuous industrial day.

MRS. HARRIET FISHER ANDREWS, WHO MANAGES A BIG ANVIL MANUFACTURING PLANT IN TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

From a photograph by Brown Brothers, New York

Go to any of the great mill towns from South Carolina up into New England and you will see still more battalions of this feminist movement. Cover the country and you will find it in an ever-increasing army representing every phase of business and industry.

The big feminist movement in America is not marked by gay suffragette flags of yellow. You see it in the great office centers of New York—solid, substantial offices, in solid, substantial structures. In these offices there are broad desks at which sit the executives in command—women of keen mind and cool judgment, who cannot afford to make errors, since a single mistake might bring overwhelming disaster.

Women in command, you say?

Precisely so. In the great vortex of business that we sometimes know as New York there are many women in command—in responsible positions, as editors, private secretaries, store-department designers and buyers, shopping agents—the list is endless. Their positions are important, and they may draw salaries of from $2,000 to $10,000 a year. And then there are others who may earn in their business or professions anywhere from $40,000 to $75,000 a year. These loom large in the feminist movement in America. To them we are going to give a bit of passing attention.

FAY KELLOGG, ARCHITECT, WHO DESIGNED SEVERAL OF NEW YORK'S ARMORIES

From a photograph by Brown Brothers, New York

New York has one woman who can sit in her office in a great sky-scraper and know that she could have built the very building itself. Her name is Alice Durkin, and to take a casual glance at her you might not suspect her of being a leader in the feminist movement—a woman who can build churches or theaters, hospitals or office-buildings, railroad bridges or dig tunnels.

Miss Durkin is business through and

through. She will tell you with a laugh that she might not be able to distinguish a Corot from a Turner. Neither does she pretend to be much of an authority on first editions, yet she knows the building code of the city of New York almost by heart. For she is a master builder — a master builder in skirts, but none the less a master builder.

The men of her craft respect and even fear her. It was not so long ago that the contracts for building the new Public Library, at Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street, were being awarded, and every important contractor in the city submitted bids. When they were opened, Miss Durkin was found to have come within $8,000 of the winning figure. She had lost the job, but she had gained something bigger — a large professional standing whose value could not be measured easily in mere dollars and cents.

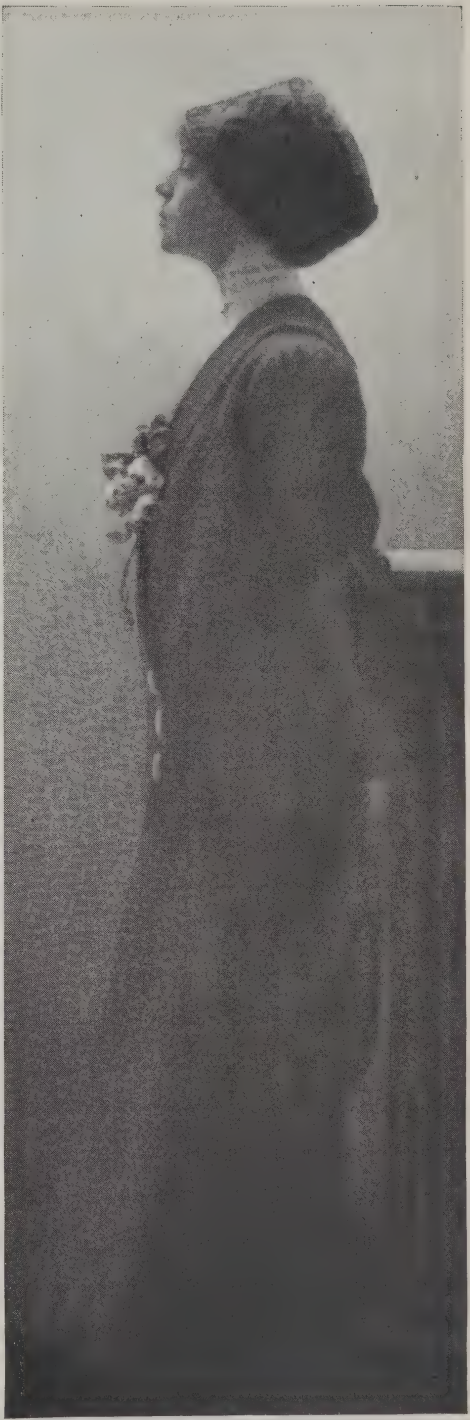
It is that standing, plus a high degree of feminine integrity, plus a feverish desire for hard work that has ranked Miss Durkin among the big money-earners of New York, be they men or women. She is still young, an alert woman of the thirties. Yet she has had many years of real experience, having been only a slip of a girl when she went to work in the office of a contractor.

While the other girls in the office were engrossed with matinées and chocolates, Alice Durkin reveled in plans, specifications, and contracts. You might think these dry for a girl of fourteen, but to Miss Durkin they spelled fascination, for she had the soul of a real master builder. And this means that she had imagination. She saw beyond the plans and specifications a completed structure.

Some of the other girls of that Peckworth office of twenty years ago are still thinking of matinées and chocolates. Miss Durkin is not. She is heart and soul in her work. Slender, mild-mannered, well-dressed, she is almost the last person in the world that you would mistake for a contractor. There are great public schools up and down the island of Manhattan that are her handiwork, office-buildings, hospitals, houses — perhaps a hundred buildings to any one of which she can point and say:

"I built that."

"I am hoping some day to build and endow a hospital here in this city of New



BELLE DA COSTA GREENE, LIBRARIAN IN CHARGE OF THE PIERPONT MORGAN COLLECTION OF BOOKS, ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS IN THE WORLD

From a photograph by Clarence White, New York

ELSIE DE WOLFE, WHO HAS MADE A METEORIC SUCCESS OF INTERIOR DECORATING

From a photograph by Campbell, New York

York—to conduct it myself," she will tell you, then add: "It is going to be rather different from any other hospital of which I have ever known."

Then she explains. There are a great number of women in a city like New York who are widowed or deserted, sometimes left without means and with infant children upon their hands. These women—the rank and file workers in the army of the real feminist movement—have to toil each day, whether they are weak or strong, and some of them are pitifully weak.

The hospital that Miss Durkin wishes to build will take such mothers when they break under their burdens, their children, too, and carefully house them until the mother has again the fair chance—is able to fight her workaday battles once more. Such is the dream that this woman master builder of New York sees.

It is some years now since Rosalie Loew began to gain fame for herself as an attorney of real ability, and, better still, a women who bent her exceptional talents to the conduct of unprofitable cases—the reaching down to help the unsuccored and the oppressed among the very poor of New York. What Rosalie Loew did in the law, Dr. Emily Dunning did in the medical profession. The newspapers hailed her ten year ago as the first woman ambulance surgeon in America, but she has been much more than that — as many folk in the crowded East Side can thankfully tell you.

And her success is the success of another woman physician who occupies an important post in keeping New York in good health. This woman's name is Sara Josephine Baker, and she has charge of the child hygiene section of the health department. It is hardly necessary to estimate the importance of her work in the real upbuilding of the city. And the rosters of the medical and legal professions, not only in New York, but all the way across the land, are crowded with brilliant feminine names; but few of these are great money-earners.

There is a profession, however, in which the making of real success invariably means the making of real money, and that is architecture. Its prizes are very few, but they are very great. Josephine Wright Chapman, like Alice Durkin, began at the beginning. She went to work in the office of a distinguished Boston architect and started at the very bottom of the ladder—as an apprentice.

First she traced the drawings of others. Then she began to learn how to draft plans herself. She worked all day and, by herself, several hours at night. There were other apprentices in that same office, but at night they had other things to do—theaters, calling, dances. Miss Chapman sacrificed all these to ambition. Her self-imposed hours were long, but she was a full-fledged architect, with her own shingle exposed, before her fellow students had graduated from the apprentice stage.

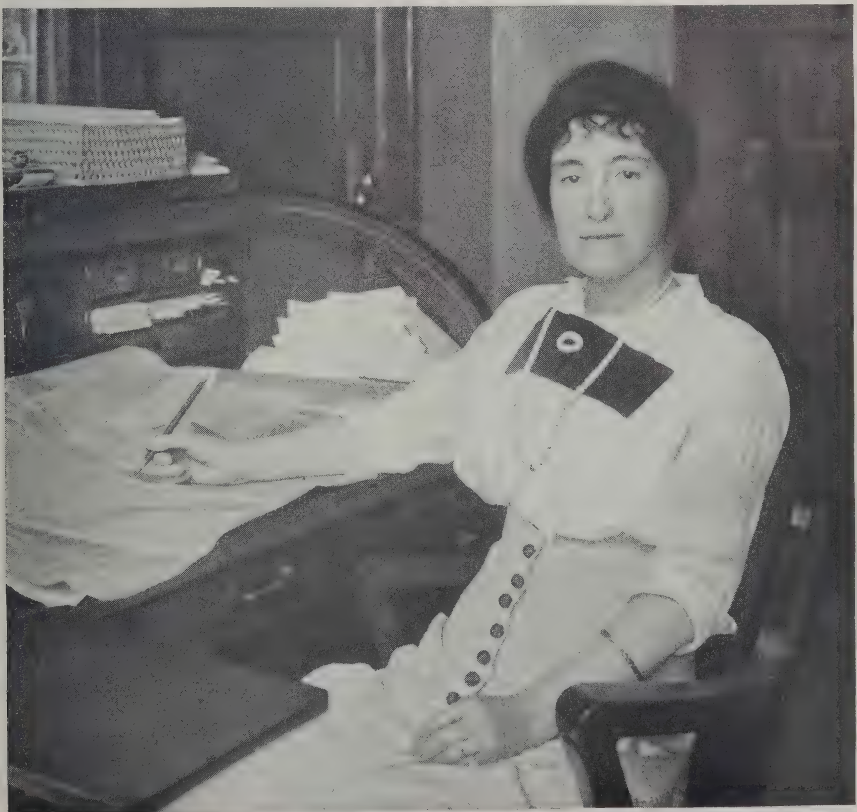
One year after that shingle had hung out and she was eking along on "pot-luck" jobs, her first real commission came to her. She was asked to design a dormitory for Harvard University. She brought to that commission such intensity and such fidelity that others poured in on her in its train. She began putting her handiwork all over New England — hotels, churches, clubs, office-buildings. She made her earliest reputation on distinctly commercial forms of buildings.

Suddenly she tired of this style of work—the fabricating of huge city cubicles upon strictly mathematical lines. Perhaps the inspiration of Ibsen's *Master Builder* had eaten its way into her heart; perhaps the eternal feminine within her was asserting itself. At any rate, she made a definite announcement:

"Hereafter I am going to build houses," she said. "I am going to leave my impress on the homes of America."

And so saying, she began to turn out Colonial houses, Renaissance houses, Spanish houses, although she will tell you that she would rather design for you the long, low, rambling dwellings of brick or half timber, many gabled, thick roofed, that are so dear to the English heart.

Once in a great while she has deviated from her policy of home-building to design



ALICE M. DURKIN, A CONTRACTOR WHO HAS BUILT NOT A FEW OF NEW YORK'S SKY-SCRAPERS public institutions, libraries, churches. She designed the New England building for the Pan-American exposition, and the way she obtained that commission is a story in itself.

The Governor of each of the New England States had appointed a man to the committee which should erect that building. In due time that committee assembled in Boston to consult with architects there. Its coming was well heralded. The Boston architects sat in solemn expectancy in their offices awaiting summonses to appear before the committee. That is, all except one waited. That one bundled on her coat and hat and hurried down to the Parker House, where the committee was just beginning to assemble. They were all at dinner.

MRS. A. H. TAYLOR, AT THE HEAD OF A GREAT MAIL ORDER BUSINESS IN BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

Before they arose from that table Josephine Wright Chapman was in consultation with them, had received assurances that she would hear from them within twenty-four hours. She did. The next day they signed the contract for her to design the New England building at Buffalo, and the conservative men architects of Boston had a distinct shock. The structure she planned was one of the most costly and beautiful at the Pan-American exposition.

Seven years ago Miss Chapman came from Boston to New York. The panic times that swept over the country brought particular distress to architects. She made stout efforts to resist conditions, but the day came when reluctantly she closed her offices and left Boston. Two months later she was again in business—in New York this time. She did not have more than a month's rent in sight, but she did have other things—ability, energy, and an indomitable faith in herself. Through these and plenty of hard work she quickly brought her business back to an even larger standing than it had formerly held in Boston.

There is another woman architect in the city of New York who cannot be left out of this brief chronicle. Her name is Fay Kellogg, and her reputation for successful planning goes side by side with that of Josephine Wright Chapman. In fact, one of the most distinguished of all the public buildings of Manhattan — the Hall of Records — was largely designed by her. Her commission from her share in the design of that building ran up into very large figures. And a number of the great castle-like armories of the city are also from her designs. She herself is a feminist captain of no small distinction.

No woman in the business world has made the meteoric success of Miss Elsie de Wolfe. It was only a few years ago when she left the stage with the announcement that she was going into the business of interior decorating.

Her friends shook their heads dubiously. " She has a fine position on the stage," they contended, " and why throw away a certainty for such a gamble as interior decorating?"

But Elsie de Wolfe knew herself better

ROSE LORENZ, WHO ROSE FROM CATALOGUE GIRL TO BE AN AUTHORITY AMONG ART CRITICS FOR NEW YORK COLLECTORS

From a photograph by Brown Brothers, New York

than her friends knew her. She had vision, taste, acquaintance in the smart world, and first-rate business ability.

Half a dozen years from back of the footlights and Elsie de Wolfe had her own shop and the best clientele in the country, with a net income from her business of $75,000 a year.

This is a record to match and overtop that of many men of the first order of business ability, and a record, too, that looms big in the feminist movement.

Elisabeth Marbury—Bessie Marbury, as every one knows her — is a marvelously clever woman. She is the head and inspiration of the big play-brokerage business over which she presides. She has raised that business to a dignified profession. She is proud to say to-day that she has helped launch close to one thousand plays, and there is scarcely a prominent playwright of the modern stage whose manuscripts she has not handled.

She conducts a big establishment, having branches in nearly a dozen European cities. She keeps in touch with the authors of the north, south, east, and west. It is hard to realize what an influence Miss Marbury is on the theater here and abroad. In the estimation of a manager her approval means much. When she sends a manuscript to a producer and gives it as her opinion that she is presenting something worthy of his serious attention, that manuscript does not wait long for a reading. Aside from play brokerage she has played a prominent part in material efforts for the improvement of the stage.

Miss Marbury has the mind of a man, in its grasp, its cleverness, its qualities of order and system, and withal the soul and temperament and sympathy of a woman.

Her achievements, her influence, her charities, her inspiration to those stumbling along the rough paths of life, radiate in all directions. Her friendships span many oceans and range all the way from the helpless and discredited to the proudest aristocracy of the social world. Bessie Marbury, like her friend Elsie de Wolfe, is a big money-earner and a brilliant figure in the feminist movement that has made good.

Art is a broad field, and one might here read into this catalogue a list of the women who are earning big money in the drama, in opera, in painting, in illustration. The annual income of Geraldine Farrar, Julia Marlowe, Ethel Barrymore, Maude Adams, and Billie Burke, to choose a few names at random from a long list, is equal to that of a big railroad president. But we cannot stop to give these great money-earners of the stage a detailed place here and now at the head of the real feminist movement.

MARY ELIZABETH EVANS, WHO MAKES THE CANDY KNOWN EVERYWHERE BY HER FIRST TWO NAMES

Rose Lorenz represents success in a curious and unexpected combination of art and business. It is only a comparatively few years ago that she sat on a stool at a desk piled high with catalogues in one of the big art galleries of New York.

To-day that catalogue girl—Rose Lorenz—is one of the important figures of the art world. And she has never been employed save in that one establishment, of which she is now the guiding force. She probably has had a part in the buying and selling of more art treasures than any other woman that ever lived. Application, intelligent reading, hard work have effected the transformation.

She is authority on Italian art, Dutch art, Flemish art, the art of the Orient, the modern schools of America and of Continental Europe. Only a collector can appreciate what it is to be an authority in the art world of to-day—when art has come into its own and tens of thousands of studios vie with the men who are digging into the treasures of the past in meeting increasing demand for the rare, the beautiful, and the wonderful.

The greatest of the millionaire collectors of America to-day rely upon Miss Lorenz's judgment. She is reputed to be one of the highest-salaried women in the world. It is said that on the twentieth anniversary of her engagement as a catalogue girl the directors of the art galleries presented her with a purse of some $20,000. Her house, which stands almost in the shadow of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, bears in its every detail the impress of her personality and of her unusual training.

A SPECIALIST IN LITERARY TREASURE

The stories of Mr. Morgan and the art world are many and interesting. Some of them are true. A good many of them are not. But the fact remains that he was a great figure not only in the world of business, but in the world of art and letters. Incidentally he was a rich man. Yet there are many rich men who are by no manner of means great men. Strip some men of their millions and the residue is not worth consideration. You could have taken J. Pierpont Morgan's last dollar from him and found him still a dominating personality.

This is not the time to recount Morgan's place in the great world of art and letters. Two things that he did for that world will redound to his credit for long years to come. One is the incomparable collection of rare treasures that he gave to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the other the unusual library that he built in the garden of his fine old house on Murray Hill.

The library is a gem of faultless architecture. It is more important to note, however, that it is a real library. There is not another such collection of missals and original manuscripts on this continent; in the whole world few, if any, that are to be ranked with it.

To this quiet workshop in the realm of thought come students slipping back four, five, six, ten centuries, men who have exhausted the resources of the best of our modern libraries and needs must turn to the original sources of information—the writings of the masters of thought of long ago. American students have found it of great value, and an astonishing number of foreign savants make the trip oversea so that they may browse in its records.

The librarians of those two great treasure-houses of thought—the British Museum, in London, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris—do not hesitate to draw upon it for aid. And they find in the Morgan book collection a librarian who is worthy of the institution—another of the captains of the real feminist army.

It was said of Morgan that his mastery came in his unerring judgment in the selection of men. He knew how to surround himself with capability; he used the same real judgment when he came to select an adviser for the purchase and the care of his art treasures. That adviser is Belle da Costa Greene, and she has come, in the due evolution of things, to be the head of the Morgan Library.

Miss Greene's specialty is books. She knows books. All her life she has known books and loved them. When she was still a little girl she developed the dominating trait that was to be the shaping of her life—the bringing to her of a very definite form of success. She was wise enough to train herself for the work that suited her, and the result has been that her tremendously busy life has been a magnificent romp. She loves her work, and her work must love her, for it gives her a renewed and vibrant enthusiasm in it.

At Miss Greene's age the average New York girl would be having a splendid time—dinners, dances, bridge, the opera—all gloriously fascinating and gloriously inconsequential. Miss Greene prefers going back in the evening to the library to delve into its treasures. She perhaps may be doing some research work for one of the great libraries of Europe, for there is hardly a librarian in civilization that does not know her.

She may be preparing for another of the huge dispersal sales that are red-letter days in New York's world of art and letters. New York has not yet forgotten the Hoe sale, where the totals ran into those millions that are the delight of Sunday editors. It was there that Belle Greene came sharply into the public eye. Bibliophiles, curators, and collectors from many lands were on hand. So was a woman who had not yet ceased to be a girl. Back of that woman were the resources of one of the great financiers of the land, and something more — judgment. She knew what she wanted, and what she wanted she got. And the sharpest of the art collectors knew that they had found in Belle Greene a competitor who was worth their mettle. They were rubbing elbows with a captain of the real feminist movement.

THE RISE OF A SHOP-GIRL

Do not imagine that all the leaders of this movement who are making a stir in the world of practical realities are located in New York. Go out to Chicago, down into State Street in the heart of its Loop. A great department-store rises from one of the busiest corners. The traffic policeman who stands guiding automobiles, trolley-cars, and pedestrians out of each other's and harm's way will tell you something of it.

" That's Mollie Netcher's store. It used to be strong on the shawl trade, now she's beginning to catch the automobile folks. Makes close to half a million a year out of it."

Mollie Netcher is a merchant princess of Chicago. She started as a shop-girl in the store she now owns, an apparently insignificant human item in a great enterprise. Yet the traffic policeman is close to fact when he tells you that she earns half a million a year, for she is rated as having $20,000,000 invested, chiefly within her business.

After all, who has a better opportunity to study the detail of retailing than one of its shop-girls? Mollie Netcher—her name was first Mollie Alpiner—had rare intuitive sense. They said of her, too, that she was " all business." While the girls on either side of her gossiped about balls and parties and what this admirer said and that one did, she gave her attention to customers. Remember that the store then had what the policeman called " shawl trade," yet Mollie Alpiner was so considerate of these folk that they formed a habit of waiting five, ten, fifteen minutes to have her attend to them.

That meant promotion. The principal owner of the store was Charles Netcher. It did not take him long to discover that the Alpiner girl had the genius of salesmanship. Three years after she went there as shop-girl, Netcher married her. They went to live in a smart new house, and Mrs. Netcher formed the habit of driving her husband down to his work in the morning and bringing him back each night. While she was out of the detail of the business for a time, her heart and mind were never away from it.

So it came to pass that after fourteen years of married life her husband died. She was left with three small children and the sole ownership of a retail business then valued at $4,000,000, a business that had suddenly lost its helmsman and was beginning to drift unruddered. It did not take long for Mollie Netcher to comprehend the situation. She took the rudder herself. Within three years the business doubled in volume, and now Mollie Netcher is considering plans for a new twenty-story building. She says that before she is done she will have the largest store in Chicago, which will mean the largest store in the world. And men who have looked at her firm chin and sensed her determination feel that she is making no idle promise.

WHAT " CLOTHES SENSE " HAS DONE

There is a wide difference between Chicago and Bowling Green, Kentucky, and yet that little town boasts another woman merchant—whose record is, in its way, not less remarkable than that of Mollie Netcher. This woman, whose name is Mrs. A. H. Taylor, earns, it is said, more than $50,000 a year. It may be remarked that this is a larger salary than any mere man within a good many miles of Bowling Green has ever earned.

Mrs. Taylor was born in Bowling Green, was married there, her children were born there, and she says that she is going to live there for the rest of her life. After the fashion of the women of every generation who dwell in small towns, she always made her own clothes. She loved to sew, and yet, like all young women, she desired to be well dressed. She was fortunate in possessing that rather rare feminine talent known as " clothes sense." In other words, she had real taste. Her friends soon saw that, and they began coming to her for hints as to the planning of their own frocks.

From that small beginning a large business has sprung. Like a good many other successful businesses of this day and generation, it is a mail-order house. Mrs. Taylor sends out her catalogues twice a year, and women from thirty or forty States respond with their measurements and orders. She has to-day 24,000 customers, and some of them are in the big cities. It is not every business head—man or woman—who can sleep two nights in a Pullman car, arrive in New York at daybreak, invest anywhere from $100,000 to a quarter of a million dollars in raw materials, and start on the long trip home again after twelve hours' steady shopping. Yet that is almost a part of Mrs. Taylor's routine. And she will tell you quite frankly that she is sixty years old.

If you ask her when she is going to retire, she will shake her head and say that she does not know. She has just finished her fine new shop in Bowling Green, and she thinks that she enjoys being a captain of business far too much to step out of the fight. If ever she does want to, there is a standing offer of an even million dollars awaiting her for her business from a great concern up in Chicago—an even million dollars, to say nothing of a trifling salary of $10,000 a year to Mrs. Taylor for the rest of her life for the use of her name. It is a name that deserves to go high on the roster of the real feminist movement.

AN EXPERT IN COTTONSEED OIL

While we are in Kentucky, let us slip a little farther south and give some passing attention to Kathryn Ballou, a twenty-three-year-old girl of Memphis, whose judgment in cottonseed oil is like unto that of Rose Lorenz in the oil that is spread over some small square of precious canvas. Just as the art collectors of New York come to Miss Lorenz to help form their judgments, so do the modern planters of the Southwest seek Miss Ballou for expert advice. She has reputation already. It was more than a year ago that she was said to have made the largest single sale ever recorded in the cottonseed-oil industry.

Cottonseed oil, as you may or may not know, has become almost within a decade one of the world's most useful products. Its uses are still rapidly increasing, and Miss Ballou has found some of them herself. As Rose Lorenz studied art, so she has studied every branch of this immensely practical subject. She investigates stock conditions because there come times when cottonseed oil makes good fodder for ranchmen; she studies soap because soapmakers are commercial possibilities; she is expert on butter markets because her pet product is almost an essential of oleomargarin. These things and many others she knows, in great detail, yet she is poised and modest; when you come to ask her of herself she waives the question and talks about the other women in the great feminist movement.

REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS IN CANDY

There is a girl from Syracuse who has made an impression in the business of New York. Her name is Mary E. Evans, and she has all the qualifications of a business general. She had an opportunity to show those qualifications when she was fifteen years old. Her father died suddenly, and there was crying need for a source of income for her mother, her two sisters, and herself.

Fortunately, this girl had a simple and womanly knack of candy-making. Her old-fashioned candies enjoyed neighborhood fame. She decided to make candies for a living.

But when she went down-town in Syracuse and tried to find an agent to sell them she met with little success. The idea that flashed into her head was so revolutionary that mere male business folk thought it idiotic.

She would place her candies in some down-town point, mark them plainly with the prices, let persons help themselves, and leave the money for her. What an absurd idea! Business Syracuse roared at it, but the girl went ahead. She called the candies after her first two names, Mary Elizabeth, and there they stood in a neat glass case in the vestibule of the University Building, the town's chief sky-scraper.

They have been on sale there a good many years in this unique fashion, and Mary Elizabeth's faith has not been shaken. Moreover, prosperity has come to her. She has gradually added to her facilities a model manufacturing plant at Syracuse, a store in Boston, and another in New York, and recently she rather astonished the business world by taking one of the largest Fifth Avenue business corners for twenty-one years at an annual rental of $45,000. It is a big thing for a woman, and her mother and her sisters came cheerfully to her assistance.

It is not only a big thing to do, but it is almost a typical thing—still another instance of how the real women's movement is coming into its own.

A DRUG-STORE MAGNATE

Cora Dow, of Cincinnati, literally grew up with her business. A quarter of a century ago her father conducted a small drug-store near the ancient Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton depot in Cincinnati, and you can imagine how small the store was when you know that Cora Dow, then a very small girl herself, could stand in the middle of it and reach the pill-boxes on one side with one hand and the striped stick candy on the opposite shelves with the other. The stock represented less than a thousand dollars, and the trade was dismally poor.

Yet from that humble beginning has grown in the old Ohio city a feminine captain of industry whose income is the envy of the great retailers there. The drug-store clerk found time to take a course and graduate from the Cincinnati College of Pharmacy. But she did not neglect her own store. Her trade thrived, began to grow by leaps and bounds. And a little later she found a bigger store—then another.

To-day Cora Dow is not only the best-known druggist in Cincinnati, but she is one of the best-known citizens of that sizable metropolis. In a business way, she has never ventured outside of it, but within she has eleven stores—ten retail and one wholesale. It has not all been as easy as it reads here. She was fought bitterly—fought, perhaps, more bitterly because of her very skirts. She has been blacklisted, denounced, hounded, threatened, boycotted, slandered, and sued because she persisted in doing a large volume of business on a small margin of profit rather than the old-fashioned reverse way of retailing, and each time she has emerged smiling and serene. The proof of it all lies in the fact that the commercial agencies rate her with doing a gross trade of a million dollars a year.

Harriet Fisher is the owner and manager of the largest anvil works in America, located at Trenton, New Jersey. These works have been run by the Fishers for half a century or more. The men of that family have been prominent in the army and navy of the United States since the War of 1812. Fort Fisher is named after one of them. In the machine-shop of nearly every war-ship in Uncle Sam's fleet you will find the Fisher anvil. You will find them, too, in China, Australia, Africa, South America, Europe.

Mrs. Fisher never imagined when she married Captain Fisher that she would become an anvil-maker herself. She took up the business through necessity. Her husband was stricken seriously ill. The foreman of the foundry was not able to conduct matters satisfactorily, and she went to the works to see what she could do.

The place did not appeal to her. It was grimy and dirty, but she took hold. She ran the business until her husband was convalescent. Then they started away on a trip. The train on which they traveled was in a collision, and Mrs. Fisher was so badly hurt that she lay in hospital for nearly a year. Her husband, too, was injured. She directed her business from her hospital bed. When finally she was able to get around on crutches her husband died. After that she redoubled her efforts. She made her crutches carry her to every corner of the great plant.

For the last five or six years she has been the sole director of the big anvil works. They never were so prosperous as under her management. She has made a lot of money. Recently she has remarried and is now Mrs. Andrews. Her husband is an officer in the Argentine navy. Mrs. Andrews comes of Puritan stock, and is the first one of her blood in many generations to have any connection with a manufacturing industry.

These are some representatives of the feminist movement who are cashing in in a big way. There are many others among the big money-earners. And there are still others, like Jane Addams, of Chicago, Miss Katherine Davis, Commissioner of the Department of Correction, in New York, and Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, chairman of the Federal Industrial Relations Commission, in Washington. In the section of the country more or less vaguely known as the Middle West there are at least a dozen women who are presidents of banks—and some of them are sizable institutions—down in Georgia a considerable railroad (the Georgia, Florida and Alabama) has a woman as its president. The fame of

Hetty Green has long since spread beyond America. A woman runs one of the finest of New York's theaters, the Hudson, and another owns and manages the National League baseball club out in the old city of St. Louis.

Many of these captains of the real feminist movement in America think easily in cool millions. Their incomes run high, as investigation and the income-tax will show. Bankers solicit their accounts with eagerness, and they are called upon to subscribe heavily to charitable and educational funds of every sort. They are rarely found unwilling to give, and to give generously, to the deserving.

For it is not in mere dollars and cents that the captains of the real feminist movement of America count their triumphs. They look upon their successes as merely stepping-stones to some bigger things—not the least of them the bringing of a larger vision, of larger ideals into the great world of accomplishment—so long and so nearly a masculine world. Nearly all of them have some pet ideal tucked away somewhere within their hopes. And not one of them is willing to concede that she has gained anything by turning from the routine of home-keeping.

"A woman came to me the other day," said one of the biggest of them, "after making much persistent effort to reach me, and stated her desire to enter one of the great new professions that are just now opening to women. She had talent. I was quickly convinced of that. But she had some other things. She had a husband and two lovely children. When I had wrung that fact out of her I spent the greater part of one very valuable day in convincing her that her workshop was in her nursery. 'Children! I wish I had a thousand of them,' I told her, and I meant every syllable of that."

I am not a suffragist. I am a reporter. These are not arguments. They are facts. But facts ofttimes are more convincing than arguments. And these facts must spell to you a definite evolution in the life of the land. Woman, in a business sense, is arriving. You may mutter about the decline of the birth-rate and of the American home and still be right. That is an argument. These are facts. And the sum total of the facts is that a definite evolution in our land is bringing woman into an entirely new social position. How this will affect her long-established position—that is a problem for economists.

TO MARIAMNE, SINGING

Sigh of the slumbering wood,
  Sob of the pine,
Articulate shadow of shades that brood
  Under the tangled vine,
Æolian echo of forest tops,
  Plaintive lament of doves,
Muted murmur of reedy stops
  Low where the hermit loves—
Where have I heard such minstrelsy,
Poignant as ocean's threnody?

Thou hast a twilit tone
  Caught from the trees
When Venus at evening wanders lone
  Over heaven's violet seas.
Rustle of restful leaves is heard
  Deep in thy velvet voice;
Dream hath its perch there, a night-bound bird,
  Havened from heat and noise.
Beauty hath found in thy voice content,
And love its perfect instrument.

Armond Carroll

CUPID AND THE PUFF-ADDER

BY SAMUEL SCOVILLE, JR.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GODWIN

PROFESSOR AMANDUS DITSON, the great zoologist, was happily engaged in dissecting the head of a cotton-mouth moccasin. This occupation, although pleasurable, involves a certain amount of concentration, since the fangs of a moccasin, alive or dead, are always ready to do business. Yet several times the professor paused with scalpel in mid-air to study the downcast countenance of his visitor, one Dick Warne, some time full-back of an undefeated Yale eleven. The venerable scientist at last finished the extraction of the last spare fang which kindly nature had tucked away for emergencies and turned to his melancholy companion.

" My young friend," he remarked, " you have sighed seven times during the past six minutes. Is the young lady who was with you yesterday in your car the cause of all of these superfluous breath-expulsions?"

The ex-footballer came to life with a start. " She's it," he remarked earnestly. " That was Dolly Madison. Isn't she a wonder?"

" Well," returned Professor Ditson cautiously, " I was engaged when we met in jumping into the atmosphere owing to a most appalling hiccup from your machine just back of my ear. Still, so far as I could determine—"

" I only wanted you to hear my new horn," interrupted Dick penitently. " The makers claim that it will always attract attention."

" It will," responded Professor Ditson positively, " I swear it. But to come back to yourself, why all this secret sorrow? Instead of sighing around my laboratory, why not marry the young woman?"

" There are a number of reasons," answered the past pride of Yale. " In the first place, she won't have me and—"

" It will be unnecessary to state the others," announced Professor Ditson decisively. " I have no interest in the series of sex-phenomena known as ' love,' " he went on meditatively, " yet in your present condition you are interfering with my researches among the pit-vipers. Purely in the cause of science I feel it is my duty to take charge of this matter. Go to her home this evening, find out the reason for her refusal, and report. I'll attend to the rest," he finished masterfully.

Dick regarded him dubiously. " You're sure that this is—er—in your line?" he began doubtfully.

" Am I sure?" snorted the great scientist. " Didn't I discover the cause and cure of the phylloxera on grapes, and locate the bacterium of the hog-cholera? Just leave it to me."

That afternoon Dick motored out to the country club where he found Dolly playing mixed doubles, partnered with young Burton, who was by way of being a poet, and entirely unappreciated by Mr. Warne.

On the porch later they met while the poet was still dressing.

" I saw your father this morning," began Dick mendaciously, " and he suggested that I take you home and stay for dinner."

" It must have been by wireless," returned Dolly coldly. " He doesn't get back from Boston until to-night."

" Dear, dear," said Dick unabashed; " my mind must be going. What I meant to say was that some time ago your father indicated in general terms that I should always see that you get home safely, and —er—look after you, because he felt that I was so reliable and industrious."

"Curious," observed Dolly. "It was only last week that he was saying you gave your law office absent treatment about five days out of the seven."

"I have been very busy outside lately," Dick admitted, "working out the details of an important agreement—a partnership agreement. Anyway, don't I take you home?" he continued hastily, seeing Burton looming up in the offing.

"MY YOUNG FRIEND," HE REMARKED, "YOU HAVE SIGHED SEVEN TIMES DURING THE PAST SIX MINUTES"

"Sorry, but I promised to go home with Mr. Burton," Dolly called back as she climbed into the latter's car. "You might come over in the evening if you will stop telling such awful fibs. Mr. Burton's got to preside at the Browning Society."

Dick spent a considerable amount of time in expressing forcefully his exact opinion of Burton, but nine o'clock found him sitting on the wide veranda of the Madisons' country house, smoking a peculiarly economical cigar, the gift of Madison *père*. The moonlight filtered through the leaves of a great white oak and made silver spangles on the opal-pink gown that adorned Dolly's lithe figure that night and from the oak's upper branches a little owl crooned softly. The conversation which had been sustained by Mr. Madison, gradually waned.

"Have you ever seen our moonflowers?" inquired Dolly at last from a hammock. "They only open at night."

"Do you know," said Dick earnestly, "that I have always wanted to meet that flower? Heard so much about it, so beautiful and—er—such wonderful perfume."

"Ours must be a different kind," observed Dolly; "they smell a good deal like furniture polish, but if you want to see them why don't you and father take a walk in the garden. I've got on thin pumps."

Dick's face expressed great pain and anguish.

"No," said Mr. Madison decisively, "no moonflowers for me. I have enough lumbago as it is without paddling around in the dew for more. I will be glad to have Dick smoke another cigar with me in the library, if he will, but as for me, I'm going in."

"Not to-night," responded Dick promptly, "I have been smoking too much lately," and Mr. Madison departed.

"Dolly," said Dick suddenly, "come on be a sport and show me the moonflowers. You know you're not afraid of the dew—or anything else."

Dolly finally yielded to his persuasions and a few minutes later they were standing before a thicket of pale-gold flowers opened wide to the mystery of the night. Dick picked a sheaf of the luminous blossoms for her, and they walked through the scented silence to a tiny stone bench tucked away under a magnolia tree, starred with white blossoms and misty with languorous fragrance. Dolly stretched her bare arms out on the cool stone — arms which, in spite of tennis, were dimpled deep at the elbow and molded like those yearning ones of the Phidian Sappho.

"THE MAN I MARRY HAS GOT TO BE MY HERO AS WELL AS MY HUSBAND"

In some mysterious way, Dick's hand brushed the nearest one and lay there unreproved. The warm vibrant touch made the blood drum at his temples as in the old days when he crouched for the signal at the opening of a great game. He leaned over until the wavy ends of the glimmering masses of hair on the proud little averted head brushed his cheek.

"Dolly dearest," he whispered.

Slowly the oval face turned toward him and from beneath long, fringed, lashes, maddening violet eyes looked deep into his. And then—for the first time Dick kissed the half-parted lips with the up-turned corners that breathed so temptingly near. For a wonderful moment they clung to his while the lids drooped, vanquished.

Only for an instant, and then Dolly was again mistress of herself and as if coming out of a dream, slipped away from his arms, and stood looking at him strangely.

"I didn't mean that," she told him at last breathlessly. "That was just the moonlight, and those old magnolia blossoms. But I'll never kiss another man unless I'm going to marry him."

"Don't you think, dear heart," said Dick very gently, holding close a limp little reluctant hand, "that you can care enough for me without the moonlight to marry me?"

There was a long pause, and Dolly withdrew her hand. "Dick, dear, I can't," she finally replied. "You're nice and dear, and I like you very much, more than I knew I did until just now. But the man I marry has got to be my hero as well as my husband."

"I see," said Dick gloomily, "like Burton, I suppose."

"He is writing an epic poem that is wonderful," returned Dolly warmly, "and he speaks beautifully about social service and says that we should all leaven our lives with uplift work, and — and — *he* wouldn't ever have forced a girl to kiss him against her will."

"Let's go in," said Dick grimly.

II

The next morning found Mr. Warne yammering at the portals of Professor Ditson's laboratory long before even that venerable early riser had appeared.

"It's all off," he announced sadly to the professor's inquiries. "Nothing doing except for heroes." Thereupon he gave a detailed account of the previous evening's proceedings expurgated in spots.

"H'm'm," remarked Professor Ditson impressively, and returned to the open countenance of the moccasin. Dick pondered this accute observation for some time.

"What do you think she means by this hero business?" he ventured at last.

"Only a normal sex-trait," replied the professor preoccupiedly. "The female ruffed-grouse, for example, would never choose a mate that did not drum and strut around her in the spring. This young female only wants you to drum and strut a little. Are you brave, Richard?" he suddenly demanded after a pause.

"I am when I know there is no danger," responded Dick simply.

"Exactly," said the professor, "that is the way with most heroes. It's been my privilege," he went on with seeming irrelevance, "to collect for myself and the Smithsonian specimens of the deadliest serpents of the world. None of them are pleasant to look upon when aroused, and one never forgets," he continued reminiscently, "the bloated body and glassy stare of the berg-adder, the uncanny rearing of an infuriated cobra, or the silent swaying, relentless waiting of the fatal hamadryad. Yet, my young friend," he went on in his class-room manner, "the American puff-adder, which is about as dangerous as the average kitten, is in action the most horrible looking of them all."

"It's interesting and all that," said Dick in some bewilderment, "but I haven't anything to do with puff-adders."

"You will have, though," responded the professor firmly. "I have, at my house, the largest puff-adder in captivity and that snake, my boy, is going to make a hero out of you."

III

The next scene in this drama of mixed love, heroism, and science was staged at Dolly's garden-party which her fond, albeit grumbling, father gave under her instructions on the ancestral acres of Beechwood. The lawns sloped down to the grove of ancient beeches which supplied the estate with its name. The receiving party, dressed in a way that would have made the proverbial lilies of the field take to the woods, exchanged tabules of polite conversation with several hundred guests. From a vine-covered arbor a stringed-band discoursed sweet strains at about ten dollars a string. On a lawn, green and level as a cricket crease, the younger set trotted vigorously to the mingled horror and delight of their elders.

Dick was prepared to make affidavit that Dolly had never looked so lovely. In a shimmering gown of the same elusive tint as the necklace of matched violet beryls that circled a neck, creamy-white as the petal of the wild magnolia, she wore a

"I CONSIDER HER A DECIDEDLY WELL NOURISHED EXAMPLE,"—

great corsage bouquet of Russian violets whose deep tints were reflected from the cruel sweetness of her eyes. Dick noted sinkingly that the magnificent bunch of white orchids he had sent was nowhere to be seen. Even the practical Professor Ditson, who also adorned the occasion in a frock coat and top-hat of the vintage of 1879, was impressed.

"I consider her a decidedly well-nourished example," he remarked privately to Dick, his eyes on Dolly.

The professor's favorable opinion was evidently shared by numerous young men who formed a phalanx around her. Closest of all was the gifted poet who watched her soulfully, occasionally murmuring presumably poetical remarks, which were evidently well received, and there seemed to be a sort of understanding between the two which much depressed Dick. Miss Madison's manner toward him of somewhat labored indifference was not at all encouraging, and moreover, Bobby Griscom was

—HE REMARKED PRIVATELY TO DICK, HIS EYES ON DOLLY

becoming a source of great uneasiness to the already perturbed lover.

Bobby was Dolly's second cousin, and although in entire sympathy with Dick's matrimonial plans, was of a dangerously frivolous disposition. He encountered Dick standing gloomily on the edge of the widening circle of Dolly's admirers.

" Say, merry old top," he remarked sarcastically, " you look like a full market on a ten point margin. Don't be so ostentatious in your joy."

" That fellow Burton gives me a sickening pain," snarled Dick.

" He *is* pretty near the limit," said Bobby, " but what about the old scout in the funny jeans?"

" Well, what about him?" growled Dick. " That's Professor Ditson, the great zoologist. I suppose you want him to wear disgustingly loud socks like those," and Dick indicated the beautiful white-clocked lavender silk creations that peeped cheerily out of Bobby's new suède shoes.

" I'm not makin' any outcry about his clothes," rejoined Bobby with dignity. " It isn't everybody who has my exquisite taste. What I'm interested in is the special brand of live-stock that he's got in his pockets. I just saw his coat-tail hump up and down." With that Bobby stared determinedly toward the unsuspecting scientist.

" Don't be a silly ass!" exclaimed Dick, much alarmed, trying to hold his friend back.

Fortunately for Professor Ditson, the poet just then made a diversion.

" Indeed, indeed, Miss Dolly," he was heard to say, " I would so like to see the trysting-beech and your great-great-grandmother's initials. It is a beautiful idea that her love and constancy will be commemorated for many centuries by the life of a stately tree."

At this pearl of thought Dick made a vulgar noise to the appreciative Robert, denoting violent nausea.

" Suppose we all go and see it," continued Burton with an air of proprietorship that intensified Dick's symptoms.

Down the long slope streamed the receiving party annexing several of the trotters as they went. At the last terrace Dolly and Burton, who were leading, broke into a run, followed shriekingly by the others, and disappeared in a grove of beech trees. There the gray-pillared trunks towered like the columns of some vast forgotten Karnak and the sunshine filtering through clouds of dark green leaves became a shimmering twilight.

In the heart of the wood was a ring of green turf marking the charcoal pit of some early settler. Just beyond two beeches had grown together and thirty feet above the huge bole the twin trunks towered side by side. On the smooth gray bark a rude heart had been cut, a side on either tree. On the left half showed faintly the initials " D. S." and on the right " D. M."

" That was my great-great-grandmother Swann," explained Dolly, tracing the faint S with her pointed fore-finger. " ' D. M.' was great-great-grandfather Daniel Madison. He enlisted for ten months with mad Anthony Wayne in 1776," she continued to her audience who had gathered in a half circle around the tree, with Burton well in the van.

" Go on, Dolly," encouraged Bobby from the rear rank. He had heard the story not more than fifty times. " You're doin' fine. Give 'em the fade-away about great-great-grandmother meetin' Dan'l out here without a chaperon and kissin' him like mad. That's what they want to hear. I know 'em."

" Bobby, you're disgusting," observed Dolly indignantly. " I won't say another word."

There was a chorus of protests and Bobby was promptly suppressed.

" Well," finally relented Dolly, " before grandfather enlisted he said good-by to Dolly Swann and they fixed a tryst—"

" That's the same as a date," explained Bobby.

" For Midsummer's Eve, a year later, at this place," continued Dolly, disdaining the interruption. " He was captured by the British and imprisoned in the hulks in New York harbor but on Midsummer's Eve she came here alone. As she stood in the moonlight," continued Dolly thrillingly, " there was a sudden rustling in the bushes and out into this circle staggered a gaunt skeleton of a man in rags with a saber cut on his forehead. It was Daniel Madison. He had swum four miles to shore, broke through the British lines, and kept his tryst with great-great-grandmother. And she kissed him, and cried over him, and married him—and so would I," finished Dolly, " if I could ever meet a hero like that—and he'd have me."

Bobby had just opened his mouth to say that he was of a heroic nature and was perfectly willing to marry Dolly, when there came a scream from the great-great-granddaughter of Daniel Madison that shattered the silence like an explosion and made Bobby jump with the agility of a kangaroo.

" Sounded like the siren on the Mauretania in a fog," he confided to Jasper Jayne the next day.

Near where Professor Ditson had been standing and not two feet from the Parisian silk stockings that Dolly had inveigled out of a protesting parent, lay coiled a fearsome snake. Nearly a yard long and with a peculiar upturned snout, this reptile gradually swelled until it was bigger than a man's arm. The distended body spread the hidden orange colored scales along the neck until it actually seemed to flame.

With open mouth, the snake hissed like

the exhaust of a steam-engine, striking fiercely meanwhile in the direction of Dolly's ankles, an embodiment of devilish brute rage and menace that turned her faint with fear and loathing. Burton's sensitive soul was similarly affected and he instantaneously withdrew ten paces to the rear. Others looked frantically for a stick or stone. Bobby began to remove his coat with the brilliant idea of extinguishing the serpent in its folds.

Suddenly through the confusion strode one redoubtable figure. With set teeth Mr. Richard Warne grasped in one hand the writhing snake amidships, back of the hideous head, held it at arm's length, and then hurled the swollen shape into a neighboring thicket. Immediately thereafter the audience might have noticed that a certain well-known scientist entered said thicket and that thereafter the bulge in Professor Ditson's coat-tails, already chronicled was again in evidence.

The audience, however, did nothing of the sort. It was too intently engaged in applauding the reward of valor. Dolly looked at Dick with something in her eyes he had never seen there before.

"You're the bravest man I ever knew!" she exclaimed, and then—before them all—she wound her still trembling arms around his heroic neck and kissed him.

"Say, there's something blame queer about all this," protested the outraged Bobby, putting on his crumpled coat. But no one paid him any attention.

OLD LANDMARKS

Some households are there in the land
Serene in their well-ordered ways,
Where still the old traditions stand
As worthiest of their pride and praise.

The restless tides have never turned
Their feet from out the paths of home;
For crowded streets they have not yearned;
Their children have not thought to roam.

The guarded legends of their race,
Through generations handed down,
Center around the dear home-place,
Nor seek they higher life-renown.

The proud initials of a name
One stamped upon this old rooftree,
Though all unknown to worldly fame,
Has lived here for a century.

The wide, substantial oaken chair,
The table with its leaves outspread,
The hallway portraits by the stair,
The blue wool covers of each bed,

Are treasured handicraft of those
Who sleep beyond the orchard knoll,
Within the little willowed close
That keeps this family as a whole.

On restful feet the years move by,
With work, with sleep, with hope, with faith,
Unchanged as is the changeless sky,
And undisturbed by aught save death.

Cora A. M. Dolson

AMERICA'S FAILURE IN THE WORLD OF SPORT AS AN ENGLISHMAN SEES IT

BY GEORGE NICOL

We published in the January MUNSEY an article of which we thought very well on "America's Supremacy in World Sports" by Damon Runyon. It was cleverly written, and we thought, fairly presented the facts and spirit and triumphs of Americans as sportsmen.

But everything is from the point of view. We fancy therefore it may interest the readers of THE MUNSEY to see how others see us. In this sense merely we are publishing Mr. Nicol's article and Mr. Nicol, by the way, is himself a sportsman of no mean stature.—*The Editor.*

IN the hour of victory the Frenchman is the embodiment of grace and gallantry; in defeat he is desolate. The German, though obviously delighted to find himself on the winning side, is distinctly annoyed when things go awry. The Englishman is, as a rule, quite embarrassed by the plaudits which greet his successes, but is Philosophy personified when Fortune fails to smile.

The American, on the other hand, is boisterously and aggressively elated when any fresh victory for the Stars and Stripes is chronicled, and only too anxious to find excuses for his defeats. It is for this reason that the American, though admittedly the world's finest athlete, is also its worst sportsman. American victories, frequent and brilliant though they be, rarely arouse any degree of enthusiasm outside "God's own country," for the simple reason that other folk know only too well that quite enough shouting will be done over the matter in America, without any outside help.

Now America has long since passed the day when a victory in any branch of world sport might reasonably be made the excuse for an outburst of schoolboyish cock-crowing, and it is high time she learned that modesty of demeanor towards a defeated opponent which all sporting tradition demands of a winner.

There is an old platitude which says that the next best thing to winning is to be a good loser, but like most platitudes, it is only half a truth. For surely, so far as the ultimate end of sport is concerned, the man who has learned to accept defeat like a sportsman is a far, far better man than he whose success merely leads him to call for a larger size of head-gear. For biceps, "pots," and records aside, the germ of the idea of all sport is to teach the youth of a nation, and indeed the "old 'uns" who look on also, that inestimable virtue, the art of self-control, and if even your "world-beater" has not learned, with becoming modesty, to ascribe his successes rather to that touch of good fortune without which none of us ever achieves greatness, than to his own immeasurable superiority over his opponents, and his occasional or ultimate defeat to his own shortcomings rather than to ill-fortune or chicanery, then sport, so far as he is concerned, is an absolute irredeemable failure.

Despite Mr. Damon Runyon's article in the January MUNSEY, however, (of which more anon), there is happily already some indication in the world of sport that the American is at last awakening to the deeper import of sport itself, and if he only tackle the question with his usual energy and thoroughness, it seems highly probable that ere long his popularity in the eyes of sportsmen generally will more nearly conform with their regard for his altogether astonishing degree of ability.

Even nowadays, mention of the America Cup is still received in yachting circles with a shrug of the shoulders, more eloquent than mere words; the "local prodigy" has usually to be fast asleep before a "foreign" boxer gets the verdict over him in the States; and unfortunately a "jump on the gun" seems to be a *sine qua non* of every American sprinter. The American Olympic Team of 1908, though comprising a phenomenal lot of athletes, hardly commended itself as representing the ideals of sportsmanship, the Halswell-Carpenter incident, the photographs of which confirmed beyond any possibility of dispute the action of the judges, being merely the culminating incident in a series of unpleasantnesses. However, by 1912, America had taken a pronounced step in the right direction, for at Stockholm she was represented not only by an even more phenomenal galaxy of athletic talent, but by what is of infinitely greater import, by a team the majority of which were real good sportsmen and most likable fellows.

To return to Mr. Runyon's article, however. This provides an almost perfect example of what the rest of the world most objects to in regard to American sport. It is merely a prolonged imitation of a barnyard rooster, and the crow rings sadly out of harmony here and there, by reason of the fact that one or two other cockerels, certainly not so lusty of lung, *would* "chip in." Now Mr. Runyon had a sufficient supply of legitimate material at his command to give the fullest meed of credit to the rest of the world and still establish an unanswerable case for supremacy, but with typical American disinclination to give the other man a "square deal," he not only omits much that would reflect against the main theme of his argument, but he also falsely bolsters up his case by quoting instances of American successes in sports which are not practised elsewhere.

For instance, billiards as played on a British make of table with six pockets is certainly a more intricate and more widely played game than the purely cannon game as played in America. Then why quote Willie Hoppe as the world's champion? Then again, when claiming to produce the best amateur rowing crews in the world at Poughkeepsie, he has certainly overlooked the Leander eight which carried all before it at Henley in 1908 and at Stockholm last year. Once more, on the subject of cycling why this significant omission of all reference to W. J. Bailey the British and world's amateur champion who only last year in the course of a flying visit to the States made the pick of American amateurs look like novices?

On the other side of the picture it is about as ridiculous for America to claim the world's baseball championship as for, say, Spain to claim a corresponding title at pelota. Moreover, to come to sports which may legitimately be regarded as "world" sports, the American, though right at the top of the tree in many respects, certainly does not hold that position of absolute invincibility which Mr. Runyon would have us believe.

At polo, of course, we give you "best," at least for the present. Fortunately the story of the ponies never got any further than the clubs here. At track athletics, while America, judging by the results of the last Olympiad, leads the world, I seriously doubt whether, at the present moment, any amateur in the world could "live" with W. R. Applegarth who, though only third at Stockholm, has since been setting up world's records in great style. How many Americans have ever shown 14 2-5 seconds for 150 yards, or 19 2-5 for 200?

Over middle distances — well, though until we find another Cornwallis or Halswelle we cannot produce an Englishman to give the best American more than a good race, they tell a very different story in Germany, where Hans Braun's treatment in the 800 meters final will not be readily forgiven or forgotten. Suffice it to say that after training principally for the longer distance, he ran Reidpath to a foot in the final of the 400 meters, and one week later, convincingly turned the tables upon Meredith, his conqueror at 800 meters, in a match run at Berlin.

At a mile Jackson an Englishman proved himself at Stockholm, while Hutson, though not able to trouble Kohlemainen or Bouin defeated America's best, Bonhag, after a great finish for third place in the 5,000 meters run. While on the subject of track athletics, however, is it conceivable that the fame of Jack Donaldson, of South Africa, the world's greatest sprinter, has not yet percolated to America?

In field athletics, though there are a few good men on the Continent, one rarely hears of a discus or javelin in England, and on the whole the world simply bows to the bearers of the Stars and Stripes in this line.

At golf, well, certainly Ouimet was an "eye-opener," but after all it is only the American championship he has won, and he will find it a vastly different proposition to lift the coveted British trophy next summer.

At boxing, I am afraid the "colored division" have it all their own way at present among the "heavies." Lower down the scale of weights, though America with her usual fondness for gaudy labels has "ticketed off" practically the whole of the world's titles to the local product, the rest of the world, bearing in mind Carpentier, Freddie Welsh, Kid Lewis and one or two others, only smiles.

At horse racing, (hardly "sport" in the best sense, this), it is seldom indeed than an American horse wins an English classic, and in fact the wide world over, the British thoroughbred is rightly recognized as being the beau ideal of equine perfection. Then again, while Danny Maher is undoubtedly a "prince" among jockeys yet the "king" had usually "turned up" in the person of Master Frank Wootton, a young Australian who for some years prior to his retirement last year on the ground of increasing avoirdupois, made a habit of topping our winning jockeys' list.

At amateur cycling Bailey and Meredith, the British cracks, must be almost tired of picking up world's official championships by now, while each of them has a string of world's records to his credit. Fancy, though, any one claiming poor old Frank Kramer, marvel though he was in his prime, as the present world's professional champion! I wonder what some of those fierce-mustached Continental cracks would say to the suggestion!

At tennis, though the Davis Cup has gone the way of so many other trophies, 'twas only after a magnificent struggle, and America's bright particular star "went under" in the singles to an Australian. Wrestling is now as dead as a doornail, but Frank Gotch was undoubtedly a tough customer in his day.

Coming to rowing I suppose no one will doubt that England still leads the way with Ernest Barry, who seems unable to find opponents nowadays, so easily gained have his last half dozen races for the world's championship been, while our Leander and 'Varsity eights would certainly smile at the idea of Poughkeepsie comparing with Henley or Stockholm.

At swimming, apart from that "young wizard of the Hawaiian waters," the "Dook," America has certainly nothing that may fairly claim to be in the world's championship class, at least, on the results of the last Olympiad.

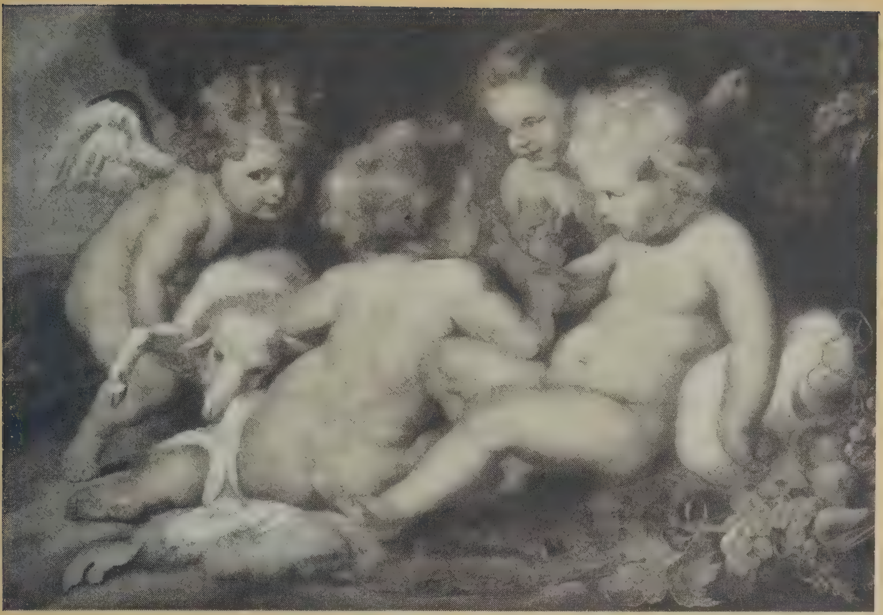
Mr. Runyon's friendly gibe at our cricket championship, we may accept with a smile, but his final shaft of ridicule anent the motor-boat trophy will come as a great surprise to most Englishmen few of whom knew of this "bright shining light" which represents our claim to world fame in matters pertaining to the manipulation of a "spitfire." Possibly even Mr. Runyon, however, has heard of the rest of the British Navy, the undefeated champion of the world since the days of the Great Armada!

A PHARAOH'S FAILURE

VAST o'er the sands of Egypt and of Time
Rises the overawing Pyramid.
What is the spell that makes its sight sublime?
Thought of a king's dust in its basement hid,
  Of him who planned it to preserve his fame?

No, not the king's—a more stupendous power
Its monument erected with these stones.
THE PEOPLE, they who toiled here, hour by hour,
To make a landmark of their master's bones,
  Immortalized their labor—not his name.

John Brown Jewett



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IDEAL CHILDREN—"CHRIST CHILD WITH BABY ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST AND TWO INFANT ANGELS"

From the painting by Rubens

CHILDREN IN PAINTINGS

(FIFTH PAPER: PETER PAUL RUBENS)

BY CLAYTON HAMILTON

IT is always difficult for an artist to secure appreciation of those rare works in which he transcends his reputation. Reputation results from the general impression that is made by the sum total of an artist's labors, and may be defined as the greatest common denominator of his achievements. Works which have contributed directly to this reputation are labeled "characteristic" by the critics and are accepted by the public as definitive of all that the artist can do. And if, now and then, he produces a work that is not "characteristic"—that cannot easily be accommodated to his current reputation — this work is likely to be neglected by the critics and ignored by the public.

Yet these "uncharacteristic" works, which contribute nothing to the artist's reputation, may be in some cases far finer than the preponderating number of creations on which his fame is based. An instance near at hand is offered by the case of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Here is a poet who was capable of such lofty and noble verse as is displayed in the series of six sonnets on the "Divina Commedia"; but he will never receive due credit for this rare achievement, because his fame is

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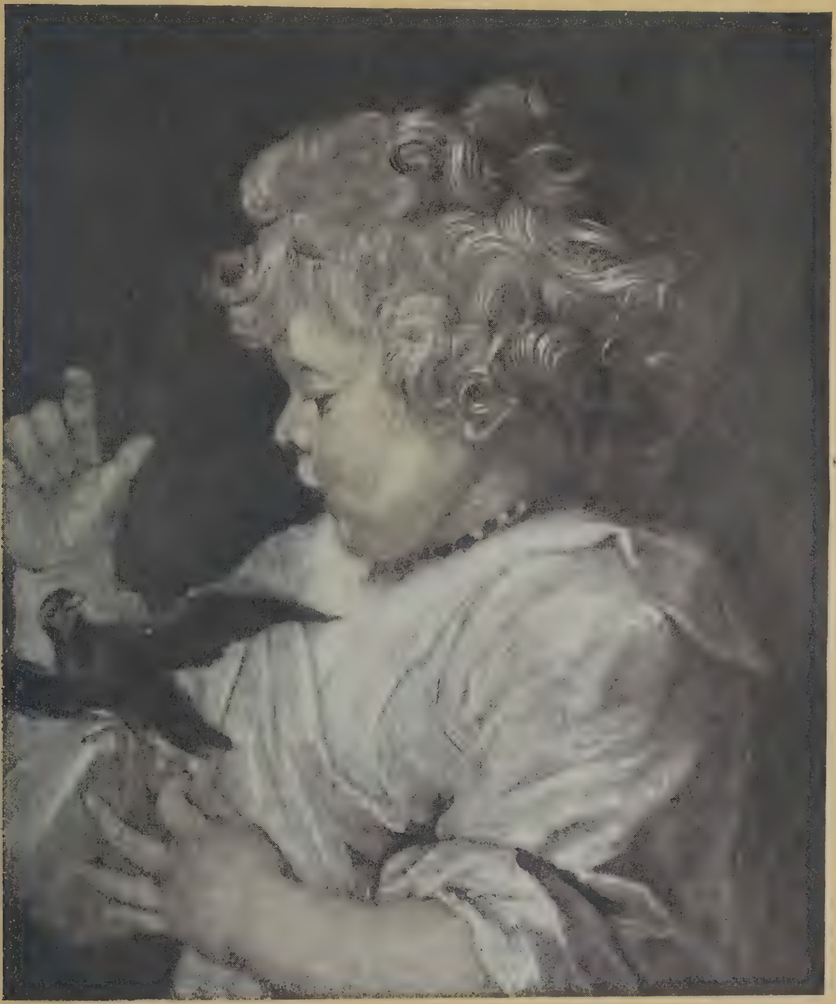
THE TWO SONS

From the painting by Rubens

founded on such pieces as "The Village Blacksmith" and "The Psalm of Life." Nobody who really likes "The Psalm of Life" could possibly appreciate these perfect sonnets; and very few of those who are capable of appreciating them would have the patience to seek for such rare gems of poetic art in the multifarious pages of the author of "The Village Blacksmith." The very fact that the poorest poems of Longfellow are more widely read than any other writings in English verse precludes him from securing the fame that he deserves for the few great poems which transcend his reputation and are therefore seldom read.



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PORTRAIT OF A CHILD OF THE ARTIST

From the painting by Rubens

Almost the same fate has befallen one of the most famous painters of the world, Peter Paul Rubens. His finest works are his portraits, and his finest portraits are his paintings of little boys and girls; yet Rubens is rarely mentioned as a portrait-painter and scarcely ever thought of as a recorder of the charm of childhood. If

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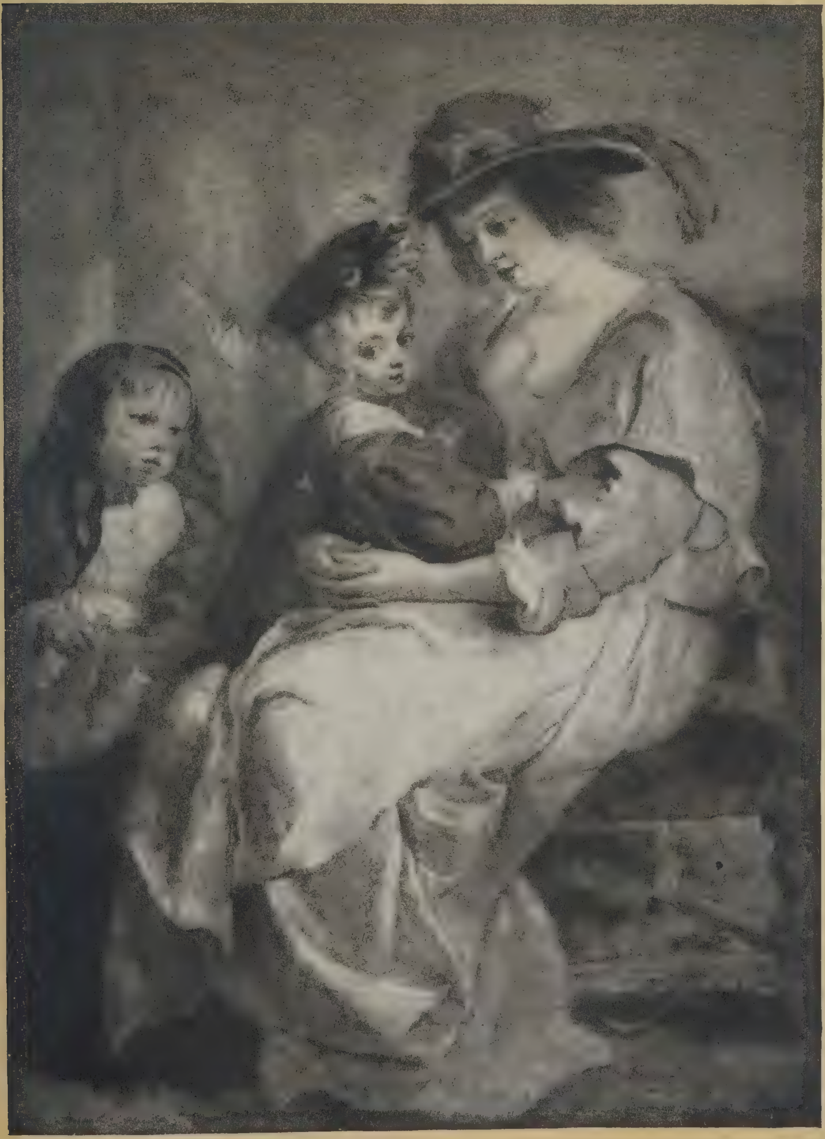
MADONNA AND CHILD

From the painting by Rubens

one, and only one, of all the canvases—nearly three thousand in number—which have been ascribed to Rubens, were offered to me as a gift, to be enshrined forever in my home, I should select the picture of his two little boys, which is reproduced in connection with the present paper. This seems to me a nobler work than the celebrated " Descent from the Cross," which is commonly recorded as his masterpiece; but it has failed of popular appreciation, because, being finer than most of his paintings, it is less " characteristic " of the sum total of his labors. But in order to appreciate this unusual achievement of the art of Rubens, we must first remind ourselves of the nature of his reputation and then inquire how he came to transcend that reputation in the comparatively few instances in which he painted children.

Rubens swept through life like a whirlwind, and the history of his career is a record of the tireless exertion of an elemental and terrific energy. He was given his grandiloquent name because he was born on the festival of the two greatest saints of the church, in the year 1577. He was of Flemish ancestry, and he happened to be born at Siegen in Westphalia only because his father had been exiled, for political reasons, from the Netherlands. His early boyhood was spent in Cologne;



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RUBENS'S SECOND WIFE AND TWO OF HER CHILDREN

From the painting by Rubens

but, after his father's death, his mother returned to Antwerp—the quaint ancestral city whose fame was soon to be trumpeted throughout the world by the son she brought back with her.

Rubens, in his teens, was deliberately trained both to be a gentleman and to be an artist. He learned the intricacies of courtly etiquette while serving as a page to the Countess of Lalaing, and he was apprenticed as a painter to Adam van Noort and Otto van Veen. He was a handsome, courtly, brilliant youth, gifted in his art and popular in his personality. He was one of those born to be great, of whom we feel that they might have attained eminence in any walk of life. When he was only twenty-three he realized that Antwerp had no more to teach him, and set out on a pilgrimage to Italy.

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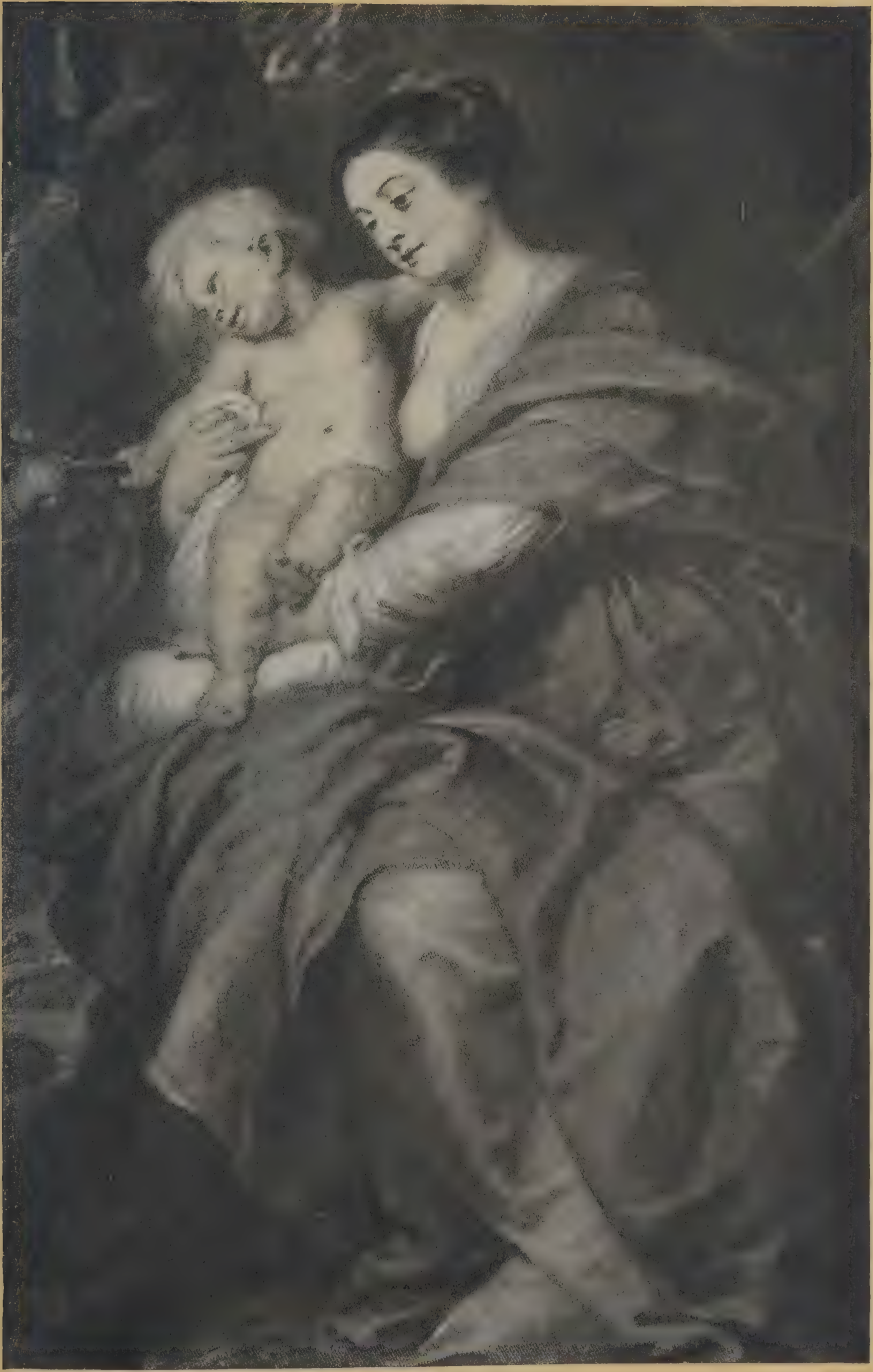
RUBENS'S HEAD OF A BOY

From the painting by Rubens



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DETAIL OF THE "HOLY FAMILY UNDER THE APPLE-TREE"

From the painting by Rubens

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MADONNA AND CHILD

From the painting by Rubens

From Titian and Tintoretto he learned the art of color, and from Michelangelo and Raphael the art of drawing. Perhaps he owed most to Tintoretto, who is his only equal among painters in sheer impetuosity of imagination; but his consciousness was more captivated by the tremendous masculinity of Michelangelo. He had not been long in Italy before his gifts, as a painter and as a man, attracted the attention of the Duke of Mantua, who gave him a position in his suite. In the company of this potentate Rubens visited Venice, Genoa, Mantua, Florence, and Rome; and his master held him in such high esteem as to entrust him with a delicate diplomatic mission to the King of Spain.

The mortal illness of his mother moved Rubens to return to Antwerp in 1608; and, secure of his own powers, he then resigned from the suite of the Duke of Mantua and dedicated his life to the service of his ancestral city. Thereafter his career as a diplomatist was just as successful, in its own way, as his career as a painter. On various occasions he was sent as a special ambassador to Spain, to France, to England, and to Holland. He was an intimate associate of kings and princes, and the success of his diplomatic dealings made him famous throughout Europe, until, crowned with honors, he died in 1640, at the age of sixty-three.

Every available moment of his unusually active life was devoted to his painting. He was enormously productive. He painted religious, historical, and allegorical compositions, domestic scenes, hunting pieces, fêtes and tournaments, landscapes, portraits—indeed, every type of picture that was current in his time. He was always at work on at least a dozen canvases at once, and while he was painting these he was imagining a hundred others. His most characteristic works display the sweep and swirl of this tremendous energy: they are vigorous, dashing, hasty, and exultant in excessive strength.

As commissions poured in upon him he was obliged to establish what may be called a factory of painters: he surrounded himself with pupils, who executed vast works from his own preliminary sketches—works which he touched up and perfected with a few final strokes of his masterly brush. His school grew so famous that in 1611 he wrote to a friend that he had been obliged to refuse over a hundred pupils. The greatest of his apprentices and helpers was Van Dyck; but such eminent painters as Snyders and Jordaens were also members of his school.

In the work of such a man we should naturally look for masculinity; and we find it, with all of its conquering merits and all of its unconquerable defects. Rubens is scarcely equaled among painters for sheer power of imagination and strength of execution; but he is often brutal and often coarse. His exuberant healthiness expresses itself frequently in fleshly terms that border on sensuality. Because of his vigorous and unrestrained imagination, his most characteristic works are lacking in decorum and in the final touch of taste.

A MOOD OF DECORUM AND RESTRAINT

Though living in a Christian age, Rubens believed as little in the religion of his time as in the mythology of ancient Greece; and in selecting subjects from either of these sources he was interested only in what may be called the narrative value of his theme. Hence, in his religious pictures, we miss that spiritual note—that note of sheer devotion—which we find in the great Italian paintings of the Renaissance. His Madonnas are motherly enough, but they never impress us as virginal. That mystic combination of the virgin and the mother which Raphael has recorded in his "Madonna of the Grand-Duke" was beyond the scope of Rubens's imagination. Even his holy children seem too muscular and pugilistic to minister to our sense of the spiritual. There is something almost sensual in the exultant vigor of the four naked children in the picture (reproduced herewith) which shows the Child Christ and the Baby St. John the Baptist playing with two infant angels.

But, on the comparatively few occasions when Rubens painted portraits, he was obliged to tame his genius into a momentary mood of decorum and restraint. He had to work more slowly and more carefully than was his wont; and this requirement resulted nearly always in a finer finish of achievement. The defects of his habitual manner are least evident in the studious and meditative portraits of his wives and children; for in these intimate pictures he strove for a perfection that he seldom found time to seek in the vast canvases replete with active figures which demanded the assistance of his pupils.

Rubens was married twice. His first wife, Isabella Brandt, who served as the model for most of his Madonnas, was married to him when she was eighteen and he was thirty-two. Four years after her death, Rubens married Helena Fourment, when she was sixteen and and he was fifty-four. Both of his wives bore children to him; and his portraits of these children must be recorded as the most delicate of all his works.

The best of all the pictures that are reproduced herewith is a portrait of his two sons by Isabella Brandt. This exquisite work is the property of Prince Liechtenstein, of Vienna, and is seldom seen by tourists, because it is hung in his private gallery. It is one of the most finished paintings in the world. Albert, the elder son, dressed in a black costume slashed with white, leans easily against massive pillars, with his left arm lightly circling the shoulders of his younger brother, Nicholas. The latter, as befitting his youth, is the more active figure of the two, and he is painted in more vivid colors. He wears a blue jacket with yellow puffs peeping through the slashes of the sleeves, and his gray breeches are trimmed with yellow ribbons. These gay colors in the foreground are offset by the somber dignity of the dress of the more reposeful figure in the background. In this perfect composition there is no hint of that extravagant audacity, that vulgar violence, which becomes evident in nearly all of the most characteristic canvases of Rubens.

Another of the paintings that are reproduced herewith shows Helena Fourment, the second wife of Rubens, with her two children, a boy and a girl. This canvas hangs in the Louvre. The boy in this picture, with his decorative hat, reveals the conscious pride of masculinity, while his little sister appeals to us with a wistfulness that almost touches us to tears. Rubens never painted a more ingratiating figure than this lovely little girl who appeals so tenderly for our attention.

The reputation of Rubens is based upon such notable achievements as the dead heaviness of the body of Christ in "The Descent from the Cross," the furious tug of the figures at the ropes in "The Elevation of the Cross," the verve and energy of the "Coup de Lance" in Antwerp, and the triumphant masculinity of "The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus" in Munich; but it is a pleasure to recognize that, in these quiet and gentle portraits of his devoted wives and children, he has ascended to a purer region which transcends the limits of his fame. As Charles Dickens surpassed himself in "A Tale of Two Cities"—as Rudyard Kipling surpassed himself in "They"—so Rubens rose far above the level of his reputation in these serene and finished pictures of his children.

THE SPIRIT OF POETRY

Weigh me as cadence, song, melody, music;
  Then hark to the scales of which voice is queen,
And candor will class my mellowest measures
  With jingling thumps of a tambourine.

Scan me as rhyme, for colorful movement;
  Then mark the marriage of wave and shore,
And candor will hold my happiest mating
  The star-foamed fluke of a bungling oar.

Read me as message, for obvious meaning;
  Then learn my full purpose in every-day prose,
And candor will judge my clearest pronouncement
  An atrophied fact born of fanciful throes.

Probe me as soul that is straining for freedom;
  Then turn to a senate, a farm or a booth;
Ask candor to name you the frankest self-seeker
  And which, in the seeking, comes nearest the truth?

Richard Butler Glaenzer

STARVE THE RAILROADS AND WE STARVE OURSELVES

BY FRANK A. MUNSEY

THE railroads are structurally a part of our national life—fiber of our fiber. They are the arteries of our very being through which courses the life-blood of the nation. We cannot do them harm without doing ourselves harm. Starve them and the pinch of poverty grips us.

The railroads were built by private capital and are owned by private capital, and yet they have little of the inherent freedom of private property. Their charters constitute them common carriers, public service concerns, and as such they are in a sense owned in common by the public and by private capital—no actual public ownership in them, dollars and cents ownership, but in the outworking the " senior partner " influence and dominancy of the public makes it amount to about the same thing.

Such a partnership between the public and private capital, the latter putting up all the money and taking all the risks, is a soft thing for the government, arrogating to itself, as it does, absolute control. Of course, it wasn't this way when railroads were built, when capital risked itself in these venturesome undertakings. If it had been — if the government's attitude towards railroads had been just what it is now, the same narrow picayune policy in force—we should have no railroads to-day except government built and government owned.

Private capital in any measure worth while would never have gone into the upbuilding of railroads, knowing in the outset the extent to which it would be fettered and hampered and harassed, as it knows it now.

I have no fault to find with government control as such. It is the kind of government control we have, with which I am finding fault. As a matter of fact, there is nothing else for us but government control or outright government ownership.

With strong, able, wise government control—a kind of control that embodies constructive co-operation with railroads — we should have a far better railroad service than we could well hope for from government owned and government operated railroads. I don't believe there is any doubt about this.

Though capital went into railroad construction with the idea that railroads were private property, the change that has come about, putting them so completely under government control, was inevitable. Neither the government nor capital foresaw this change in the early days of railroad development. Indeed, it was the very vastness of this development and the incomparable power railroads had come to be that compelled public control and gave rise to the present conception of the proper relations of the railroad, common carrier that it is, to the public.

The government, therefore, cannot be charged with luring capital into railroads under former railroad freedom with the knowledge that this freedom later on would be taken away from them. Until within a little more than a decade ago there was no serious conflict of opinion between the government and the railroads.

At the outset no one ever dreamed of the power the railroad has come to be and the part it plays in our daily lives, to say nothing of its inconceivable contribution to the opening up and development of the country.

It follows naturally that changes in our laws must be made suited to this new development—a development so vast in its power that, unchecked and uncontrolled, it would in time contest for the mastery with the very government itself.

So government control had to come, but in the exercise of its control it has frightfully crippled and maimed the entire railroad business of the country. Capital has lost heart and would get out if it could do so without too great a sacrifice. Dividends on railroad shares have dwindled until they have no appeal to fresh capital. The government stakes out the lines within which capital must work, fixes its rates of income, and then says to capital, " Give us the best railroad service in the world."

All this would be well enough if the government's conditions were such as to make this possible, which is not the case. The fact is the railroads cannot give us the service we demand, pay the wages and taxes they are paying, and live on the income to which the government is grudgingly holding them down.

But the chaotic condition of the railroad business is only a little worse than that of business generally throughout the country. There is no snap and go to anything, and everything is in a blue funk. In view of these conditions, what are our chances of having good times? We hear the question all the while. It is on everybody's lips. The answer is vital. It affects our entire population, one hundred million human souls. No one is beyond the sphere of its influence. Our expenditures, our incomes, the scope of our undertakings, the scale of our living — our necessities, our comforts, our pleasures, our luxuries, our savings, and our very future—all depend upon it.

We are a temperamental, impressionable people. When we have good times we hurl ourselves on enterprise and sweep everything before us. When we have hard times and feel the pinch of poverty and see idle cars, idle factories, and idle labor, we get a fit of the blues which makes us distrust our institutions, distrust ourselves and look upon life as one weary grind.

We have wallowed in the slough of despond since the beginning of 1910, and to-day our securities, battered and tattered, find little favor with European investors. Every enterprise has felt the lack of confidence, the lack of courage, and has perforce squared itself to that grim, ill-shapen thing—the thin pocketbook.

But human nature, and particularly American human nature, cannot be kept down forever. We have had enough of the valley, with its fogs and chills, and want to get away from it all and once more look out on the world from the sun-swept heights. And, too, we want to hear the old, old story of what a wonderful country we have, of the vastness of our resources, the colossal measure of our undertakings, the bulging of values and the song of opulence and wealth and riches—enthralling music to our ears.

Starving the railroads and hostility to capital are responsible for our business depression and industrial stagnation. The government has overplayed its hand in humiliating capital and breaking up our big enterprises. Its obvious worry lest somebody, somewhere, somehow, might make a dollar has been overdone. Continue the policy of starving the railroads and we shall continue to starve ourselves, and shall have no good times. Let the railroads make a decent living, and the wheels of enterprise will leap into activity.

But Wall Street says good times are here. Wall Street may be right and may be wrong. Things have been deadly dull down there for so long that every one clutches at the very suggestion of hope. Hope in Wall Street is perhaps father to the wish. It looks to me as if it were in this instance. Wall Street is amazingly elastic in its conclusions. When it comes to shifting its opinions it puts a lightning change artist out of the running.

I am not writing as a pessimist. I am an optimist through and through, but optimism must take cognizance of facts. And what are the facts on which to base the hope for business activity, with our new low tariff, unless we get a *gigantic impetus* from some source or other?

It is clear that with our high wage we cannot get this impetus from such exports as come into competition with the products of the low wage of the rest of the world. And if not from exports, whence shall we get the quickening influence? The new currency law won't bring it. The new currency law will perhaps make money easier, but money is already easier than need be, both at home and abroad.

The lower price of money will no doubt benefit the farmer and perhaps stimulate him to wider activities. This will be good in itself, and may have some effect in lowering the cost of living, and then again it may not. But cheaper money to the farmer cannot and will not prove the impetus to revive business.

The lower rate of money will make it easier for borrowers, but in itself it will not be sufficient to impart activity to a dead calm, to break the grip of paralysis. Unless it so happens that the new currency bill proves to be a measure of inflation, it won't have the dynamic force to create energy, overcome inertia, and start things going. If, on the other hand, it brings about inflation we shall have a short hurrah run for our money, followed by such a reaction as will make the whole nation cry to heaven from the very hurt.

A great international war might set business going, and so might a change in our tariff—the kind of change that gives courage and confidence to home industries. But we have just had a revision downward, so there is no probability of an immediate revision upward; and there are no instances on record where revision downward, or low tariff, or no tariff, has ever re-energized anything here at home. On the ground of precedent, therefore, we haven't much to look for from our recent tariff legislation, and we are not now at war with any nation; so just what is there in sight, when we get down to the raw cold facts, to justify a belief in an immediate onrush of good times?

Agriculture cannot bring it about; war is not likely to bring it about; our new tariff is certain not to bring it about; the iron and steel trade cannot bring it about; the textile manufactories cannot bring it about; mining in all its different phases cannot bring it about; and all the scattered, smaller manufactories cannot bring it about.

It may well be doubted if anything can bring it about, as matters stand to-day, except the railroads, and the railroads can bring it about if they are allowed freight rates and passenger rates that will enable them to do business at a rational and fair profit—such a profit as will give place and value to their securities in the markets of the world.

This is what we want at this juncture to give us good times, temporary good times at least, and good times for a long run, if the policies of the government with regard to business, the tariff, the currency and in other respects are right. If these are not right it is pretty safe to assume that we, as a people, have the good sense and the patriotism, irrespective of politics and politicians, to make them right.

But just why can't agriculture give this impetus to business, and why is it that railroads alone can give this impetus to business? Briefly, the answer is this: Agriculture is a producing and selling industry. If we were growing a vast surplus beyond our own requirements and could sell it abroad, the new money flowing across the ocean would give us the impetus we need. But unfortunately we have no such surplus and are not likely to have.

The steel and iron industry, vast as it is, in the aggregate, and well concentrated as it is, cannot in and of itself revitalize business. Like farming, it is a producing and selling industry. This is equally true of the countless scattered enterprises of one kind and another. Merchandizing doesn't even produce anything. It has to do merely with barter and sale. Banking, likewise, produces nothing. It is parasitic in its very nature.

The railroad, unlike these other enterprises, has nothing to sell but service. It buys, buys, buys, and all the while buys. It is a purchasing and consuming business, which ranks next to farming in its vast scope. The wages of railroad employees have so far increased that now they call for practically one half of the gross receipts of railroads. The sum total paid out to labor by the American railroads is greater than that paid to labor by any other enterprise in any country of all the world. The railroads hold the key to the present business situation. Give them a chance and they will set the wheels of industry going. But they can do nothing for business and nothing for themselves impoverished and starved as they are by the government.

With a chance to live and to earn enough to make their securities safe and attractive to investors the world over, they could sell them like a shot.

What we need and must have at this juncture is new money and lots of it. The railroads alone can find this new money. But it is up to the government to decide whether they shall find it or not. So far the government in its non-constructive or, if you will, destructive policy has refused the railroads a chance for their lives.

If the government would get back of the railroads and give them a lift, the railroads would get back of business from one end of this country to the other and give it a lift—would get its great broad shoulder under business and heave it into action. Assure investors that our railroads have back of them the great American people, the good feeling and spirit of cooperation of the American people, and have back of them as well the strong, helpful hand of the government, untold money would flow into this country from abroad and vast sums of sleepy money tucked away in odd places here at home would straightway come out of its hiding and go into railway securities.

And what wouldn't this money mean to us—all this vast aggregate of new money in the coffers of the railroads to be spent for labor, for betterment, and for new undertakings? The railroads must have new rails, new cars, new engines, new ties, new bridges, new stations, better roadbeds and a thousand other things. They must add to their sidings, double their trackage, and extend their roads into new territory. All this means work for idle men and full envelopes on Saturday nights.

Indeed, the railroads would begin buying on so tremendous a scale that our steel mills and other concerns having to do directly and indirectly with railroad supplies would be taxed to their capacity and beyond their capacity. And the high pressure activity in these lines would electrify the whole country and set every spindle spinning and every wheel of industry bounding into action. And there would be no idle men, no idle cars, no shuttered factories, no depression, no blues. Activity and enterprise and achievement would grip the country from ocean to ocean and from the Gulf to the northern border.

This is not an idle fancy. It is the very thing that would happen, and such a happening is the very thing we all want. And if we all want it, why shouldn't we have it? We are the government; the government is the thing of our creation, the servant to do our bidding.

The question, then, is this: shall we give the railroads a square deal, or shall we continue to punish them for the sins of a former period, when the relations of railroads to the public were not understood as they are now? In the old days people held to the idea as a matter of course that railroads, owned by private capital, were private property. We didn't know much about public service concerns then. We accepted the theory as a matter of course that the biggest shippers should get the lowest rates. Wholesalers bought at lower prices than retailers, so why not wholesale rates to big shippers?

But once the public service conception was fixed in our minds we saw the railroads in an entirely different light. Naturally railroad managements fought for the independence they had always had, and doubtless fought honestly, influenced by their interests. But all this has changed now. Ten years of discussion has brought capitalists and public, the fair-minded men among each, to a common understanding of the relations of capital to the people, of trusts to the people, of the railroads to the people, and of the relation of telegraph, telephone and all other common carriers to the people.

We ought to have, and I am satisfied that the American people demand, the best and safest railroads in the world. It is a certainty that we cannot have them without paying the price—railroads with every new device, every improvement that means safety and better service. And we can well afford to pay the price when the failure to do so means inferior railroads, dangerous railroads.

Forcing railroad managements into a position where they have been compelled to squeeze paltry dividends out of half-fed, half-nourished properties that they might keep their roads out of bankruptcy is a rotten policy.

Legitimate economies are fundamentally necessary to honest, able management, and whatever the government has accomplished in the way of cutting out waste and introducing first rate standards of economy is, of course, very much worth while. But to starve railroads into other economies, such, for instance, as skimping on roadbeds, skimping on bridges, skimping on rails, skimping on rolling stock, skimping on safety devices, and skimping all along the line, is quite another matter. They are costly savings to the people, dearly bought savings.

I hold no brief for the railroads; I am not speaking for myself as I hold no railroad stocks, and don't wish to hold any under present conditions. Neither am I speaking for those who do hold railroad stocks. I am speaking for idle men, speaking in the interest of better business, speaking for a square deal for the railroads, for safe railroads, sound railroads.

For the government to stand back of railway labor, morally sustaining it in its demands, for shorter hours and better wages, as the government has done, at the same time denying railroads the right to increase their incomes sufficiently to meet the increased cost of operation is of the nature of confiscation, and no honest citizen of this country believes in any such thing or would himself, with full realization of the facts, be a party to it.

Let us have peace. Let this bitterness against the railroads cease. There is nothing in all this warfare for you or for me. Give the railroads a chance to prosper and we prosper with them; starve them and we starve with them.

THE EMPRESS OF FIGUREHEAD SQUARE

BY EDWARD BOLTWOOD

FIGUREHEAD SQUARE was not, properly speaking, a square at all, but a grassy triangle, lying at the intersection of three slumberous streets of the old New England seaport, and in the middle of the triangle had been planted the battered wooden image, which gave the tiny park its name.

The image represented a bulky woman of extremely fierce aspect, wearing a spiked crown. Long ago, her daily business had been to frown fiercely at turbulent oceans, from the bow of the busy Empress, Captain Simon Claghorn, master. Now, she had stood idly for seventy years in drowsy Figurehead Square; and she scowled, just as fiercely as she had scowled of old in the whaling-grounds, at the stately brick house, which Simon Claghorn had built across the street.

One bleak, gusty forenoon in November, Obed Claghorn, Captain Simon's grandson, limped into Figurehead Square. His gait was stiffened not only by age, but by his morning's scalloping. The Claghorns no longer owned great ships, and Obed was the master of an humble cat-boat. In summer, he "sailed company"; in winter, he scalloped. This morning his luck had not been very good, and the market-basket on his arm was light.

At the glistening steps of the Claghorn house, old Obed paused and glanced wistfully down Main Street over the shoulder of his ragged jacket. Vast commotion was evident on Main Street. As many as twenty men were gathered at Pritchard's corner. There were shouts, and laughter, and bustle, and glimpses of the new blue coat of Virgil Peck, the constable, recently dignified by a uniform. Excitement was rare in Obed's drab life. He wished ravenously to know what the commotion was all about.

However, he realized that Lydia was waiting for the market-basket. If he delayed to carry it around to his kitchen-door, he might miss seeing the only arrest on the island that autumn. On the other hand, his elderly sister's strict rule forebade, of course, the use of their sacred front-door for any entrance save that of ceremonial guests, to say nothing of a wet and shabby fisherman in rubber-boots. Simple old Obed twisted the brim of his oilskin hat in an agony of perplexity.

A distant roar of mirth from Pritchard's corner determined him. He set his jaw hard, and turned the heavy glass knob, and the white door closed behind him with a complaining rattle. From her post outside, the wooden empress seemed to scowl her redoubled disapproval at the Claghorn house.

"Well, I never! Well, Obed H. Claghorn! Well, I never did!"

Miss Lydia glided into the darkened hall from the shadowy parlor. Miss Lydia seldom appeared exactly to walk; she glided, like a majestic iceberg.

"I—I hope you'll kind of excuse me for once, Lydia," faltered Obed, placing the basket gingerly on a chair.

"Why?" she demanded.

"I'm in a real hurry," said he. "There's something on the street I real want to see about. Peck's arrestin' a fellow."

His sister haughtily drew herself up to her full height. She was taller than Obed, who was bent and toil-worn.

"Running around with street loafers!" she sighed. "Can't you ever remember, Obed, that you're still a Claghorn? It's bad enough, land knows, that you can't do any better than to make our living out of a scallop-boat, but you might consider me a little, when you hanker to 'sociate with drunken men."

"I dunno whether it's a drunk or not—that's just the p'int," ventured Obed timidly.

"And can't you ever remember your brother Cromwell, bein' a lawyer up there in Canada, and doin' credit to our name?" went on Miss Lydia. "What would Cromwell and his fine French wife think, if they knew how we lived, and the sort of cheap folks you 'sociated with — Virge Peck, and scallopers?"

She was well aware that her daily reference to their brilliant younger brother always tyrannized Obed, and it was with a satisfied smile that she watched him pick up the basket, and meekly limp with it down the hall toward the kitchen. Then Miss Lydia glided into the parlor.

A faint odor of the South Seas pervaded the Claghorn parlor. Tropical woods vaguely scented the cheerless room. Queer little boxes from Japan and queer little idols from Oahu adorned the mantelpiece, beneath which sat Miss Nabby Blain of Honolulu Street, herself resembling at that moment an outraged idol of village aristocracy.

"Yes, Obed's real vexatious," said Lydia, in an apologetic voice. "There's times it's hard to believe he's a genuine Claghorn."

Miss Nabby was a distant cousin, and at this she fingered her bonnet-strings fretfully.

"He doesn't favor any Claghorn that I ever remember, Lydia—not one. Well, I must be going. You were talking of Cromwell out in the passage, weren't you? There was a genuine Claghorn for you—looks and all. Have you heard from him lately?"

"Not — not so very lately," hesitated Lydia.

She turned and pretended to straighten a carved bit of a whale's tooth on the mantel. Beside the ornament was a faded photograph of a handsome man, with a boyish, smiling face.

"I guess it's full a dozen years since he was on the island," said Miss Blain. "That notch in his chin is just like his father, the judge, had. Good-by, Lydia dear! Sort of settlin' weather after that awful storm, isn't it?"

II

In the meantime, Obed had left the basket in the kitchen, and fled guiltily down the alley, toward the foot of Main Street. He was too late. Pritchard's corner was deserted. In front of the town-building, paced Virgil Peck, stroking the breast of his new coat, as with the proud consciousness of hazardous duties safely accomplished.

"He's one o' the crew o' that Maine lumber-schooner" explained Peck importantly, "that was piled up off Quinnet last night. Rest o' the hands, they took the mornin' steamer, but this rapscallion drank up his ticket money, that the humane 'ciety give him. Seems sickly, too. Name o' Smith, 'lthough I set him down for a Portergee, from his black beard. You listen, Obed, and you'll hear him yell same as a fog-horn. Tremens, I shouldn't wonder."

Obed listened hopefully at a window in the basement. Presently a plaintive whimper drifted softly through the iron grating.

"Call that a fog-horn?" Obed protested, in disappointment.

"No, that's the kid," answered Virgil Peck. "Him and his brat come ashore on the same spar. Boy—three or four years old—don't talk much."

"Poor little shaver!" said Obed.

"Oh, you needn't worry!" Virgil declared condescendingly. "If the kid's got its father's wu'thless blood in him, it ain't fit for wastin' pity onto. There he goes! What'd I tell you?"

Indeed, Peck had not exaggerated the vocal powers of the castaway behind the bars; the shrill, delirious voice had the metallic quality of a fog-siren.

"Curse you all!" screamed the prisoner. "What dog-kennel is this? Let us out! Let the child out of this hole! Can't you hear me, curse you? Let the child out!"

The wrinkles became suddenly more apparent on Claghorn's troubled face.

"Say, Virge, that's sort o' tough! Why don't you turn the little boy loose?"

"Where to?" retorted the constable irritably. "That drunken rascal, he'd only raise another holler. Come noon, I'll get the town-agent over here from the poorhouse, maybe."

Obed, shifting his weight uneasily from one foot to the other, peered through the grated window of the lock-up room. He was confronted by a pair of tearful blue eyes, half-hidden by a tumbled fringe of golden hair. He could see nothing else in the dark cell.

"Why, Virge, he's a real pretty youngster—real nice lookin'! You let me take him, Virge. Don't you turn him over to that mis'rable skinflint at the poor-farm. You let me take him, till his daddy gets better. I'll give him a meal of victuals, anyhow."

Peck stared incredulously.

"You—you—great land o' Goshen!" he gasped. "What would Lydia T. say?"

"I dunno," acknowledged Obed. "I don't guess anybody knows." He glanced up and down the street. "Let's us find out what she'll say, Virge," he added craftily.

"All right," chuckled Mr. Peck, with a grin of appreciation.

He led the way into a basement corridor of the town-building, and slid the bolt of a ponderous door.

"Hey there, you Smith!" he bellowed. "Here's a nurse-girl come to look after your kid. Name o' Claghorn."

"Who?" said the wild voice.

"Cap'n Obed Claghorn, o' the scallop-boat Empress," elaborated Virgil by way of humor.

Obed gazed for a moment at the strange, black-bearded man who lay, ominously sprawled, on the iron bench, and then he held out his gnarled and weather-beaten hand to the little boy, cowering in the corner.

"Will you cruise 'long with me, for a spell, sonny?" he said.

Juvenile shouts arose in the street.

"Virgil Peck!" they mocked. "Virgil Peck, Virgil Peck—gives us all a pain in the neck! Virgil Peck, Virgil—"

"Darn 'em!" snorted Mr. Peck. "Just 'cause I've got me a uniform, they—I'll show 'em!"

The irate official dashed to the sidewalk, and from the curbstone conducted futile forays against his tormentors.

"I reckernize you, Joel Macy," he panted. "You, too, Lucy M. Gardiner—if I didn't have no prisoner to watch, I'd chase you good. And you, Ed'ard Folger, don't you think I can't sight you, behind that tree. Shut up your heads! Want to get jailed? Want to—well, well, Cap'n Obed! It didn't take you long to fix it, hey? I'd like to have a picture o' Lydia T.'s face, when she sees you bringin' home a bummer's kid out o' the lock-up. She'll look more like that figurehead than ever! Funny a joke as I've heard this year sure enough!"

Old Claghorn did not seem to be amused. His eyes had a veiled, frightened expression; but his usually stooping shoulders, although he bore the little boy in his arms, were now oddly straight and determined looking, as he marched in silence up Main Street and into Figurehead Square.

On the top step of the Claghorn house, desecrated once before that morning by Obed's fishing-boots, Miss Lydia was busy with a broom and a pail. She leaned on the broom-handle, paralyzed by the astounding spectacle in the highway.

"Lyddie," said Obed, "this boy's shipwrecked. There ain't any house that had ought to take in shipwrecked folks quicker'n Cap'n Simon Claghorn's."

"Shipwrecked!" echoed Miss Claghorn sharply. "Where's his home? Who's his father?"

"His father's a shif'less, drunken vagabond, that Virgil Peck arrested this mornin'. I won't lie to you, Lyddie. His father's a drunken vagabond, that's all. But 'tain't nothin' against this boy. We'll just give him a meal o' victuals, same as grandpa would 'a' done to any shipwrecked folks. We'll be genuine Claghorns, sister."

He ascended the steps. Miss Lydia, in perplexed consternation, drew back. As the child passed her, the tearful blue eyes looked solemnly at Miss Lydia, over Obed's sleeve, and an extraordinary thing happened. Miss Lydia chirped.

"Why, you poor little thing!" she whispered inaudibly.

A fugitive sunbeam escaped from the shifting clouds and gave briefly a queer look to the face of the ship's figurehead in the square. It seemed for an instant that the wooden empress almost smiled.

III

No smile, however, graced Miss Lydia's imperial face, when Obed had deposited his burden beside the kitchen stove. His sister, with recovered self-possession, glared at Obed.

"I dare say this youngster's drunken daddy is one of your low-down friends," she sniffed.

"He was on the vessel out o' Machias," answered Obed patiently, "that was wrecked off Quinnet. I'm not lyin', I tell you. Even Virge Peck doesn't know him, and Peck knows everybody."

Miss Claghorn, partially mollified, "dished up" the scallop stew.

"What's your name?" she demanded.

"Thimon," lisped the child.

"Simon what?"

The boy blinked doubtfully at her.

"Simon Smith," supplied Obed. "Smith was the name Peck give me for him. You see, this little shaver can't speak it very good yet. Draw 'longside, Simon, and fall to. I'll bet you come ashore with a swep' hold."

Little Simon ate with quiet industry, like a well-bred animal, but it was evident that Obed lacked appetite. After a few minutes, he laid down his spoon.

"I—I guess I'll be gettin' down street," he mumbled. "I guess I'll be gettin' down to—to the town-building. That Machias feller's awful sick, and young Doc Herrick ain't been long on the island, and maybe he ain't just reli'ble, sort o'."

Miss Claghorn, who had been examining Simon's tattered stockings, raised her head indignantly, and all her suspicions returned.

"Go off to your vagabond friends, then!" she exclaimed. "And take this no 'count child with you."

"But he's hungry yet, Lyddie" objected Obed, "hungry and ragged. Maybe you can make out to fix him up, somehow. That would 'a' been grandfather's way. I'll be back d'rectly."

"If Nabby Blain and the others find out the trash you're 'sociating with!" groaned she.

"Oh, they won't find out, not if I can help it!" Obed said; and he patted the boy's curls stealthily, and limped into the alley.

Miss Lydia cleared the table, and made ready to wash the dishes, and, as she moved briskly about the kitchen, little Simon regarded her with a contented smile from his chair. It was a new experience for Miss Lydia to have company in her kitchen of an afternoon. She caught herself smiling back at Simon, and then felt that somehow she had done something vaguely wrong.

"I can wipe" suddenly announced the boy.

"Mercy, no!" blurted Miss Claghorn.

The boy smiled. Miss Claghorn smiled again, then frowned, then stared at him reflectively. The warm water in the dishpan had suggested a wild scheme, which amazed her.

"You ought to have a bath" she murmured, in a low voice not at all her own. "Would you like that?"

"Yes," said Simon.

She heated water, and brought soap, and wash-cloths, and a blanket from the adjoining bed-room, where her brother slept. By the time she had returned, the child had undressed himself. It had been no great task; his rags lay in a heap on the floor, and his slim body rose out of them, like a slender, white, pure flower out of the dead leaves of a marsh.

"My gracious!" gasped Miss Lydia, and she hastily pulled down the window-shades.

The boy stood between her knees, and the water trickled over his flawless skin in affectionate rivulets. Miss Lydia had never bathed a child. In a sort of daze, she stroked the little arms and with her fingers combed out the tangle of yellow hair.

His clothes were impossible, and so, when she had finished, Miss Lydia wrapped him in the blanket. Simon, a helpless bundle, looked up at her with twinkling eyes. She raised him to her lap.

"My gracious!" she repeated, under her breath.

He was very warm; Miss Lydia could

feel the warmth of his soft body through the blanket, as she rocked gently to and fro. The rockers of the chair made a soothing, comfortable creak. The Claghorn house was always silent, and Miss Lydia thought of all the silent, lonesome hours which she had spent there, since she was herself a child.

From the pantry-partition came a furtive sound, as of the nibbling of tiny teeth.

"Ickle mouse," breathed the sleepy boy.

"Yes, dear," agreed Miss Lydia absently; and then, as the golden curls settled close against her prim and withered cheek, "My gracious!" said Miss Lydia for the third time, in the awed tone of a discoverer.

It was late in the afternoon before Obed returned. His anxious excitement was so great that he failed to be visibly astonished by the picture in front of the kitchen-stove.

"He—Smith—he's broke out o' the lock-up!" chattered Obed confusedly. "Doc Herrick and Virge was talkin' in the street and he—Smith—he took, and skipped! They're lookin' for him everywheres, but—and the doctor says his heart's terrible weak! What'll we do, Lyddie?"

"Don't speak so loud, for one thing," rejoined Miss Claghorn. "You'll wake Simon. You haven't got any more sense, Obed, than a block of wood."

IV

THAT night, Miss Lydia, lying in her bed up-stairs, was aroused by something. She did not know what it was, and she propped herself on an elbow, listening. In the distance, a church-clock boomed the hour melodiously. She thought that perhaps it was the bell which had aroused her; and she gazed drowsily around the moon-lit room, and at the little boy, in an old-fashioned crib beside her.

Abruptly, a crazed and metallic voice rasped shrilly from the hall below.

"I shall have him! I shall go up!"

Miss Lydia heard Obed's muffled, breathless reply.

"You oughtn't go—she mustn't see you—wait, you oughtn't—"

There were the sounds of rapid footsteps, of a panting man, of a heavy fall on the landing, close to her threshold. She staggered to the door, opened it, and went out into the hall.

Obed, with a flickering candle, was half-way up the stairs. But Miss Lydia hardly saw Obed. She looked down upon the black-bearded, wondrously peaceful face of one who lay, lifeless forever, at her feet.

"Cromwell? Is it—is it Cromwell, Obed?"

"Ay, 'tis Cromwell," Obed moaned.

He lumbered to the landing, and knelt clumsily beside his brother, and bent low over the peaceful face.

"Gone, Lyddie—he's gone. Herrick told me he couldn't live, hidin' out there on the moors. I guessed somehow, he'd come to the old house 'afore he died—but I didn't want you to find out. I aimed to smuggle him off-island. I kind o' wish now—wish he'd seen his boy again."

"His boy? Simon?"

Obed nodded.

"Cromwell's wife went wicked, two years back, Lyddie, and run off, and he got reckless—took to drinkin'. He was workin' down to the island on that lumber schooner. Don't take on, Lyddie, don't feel that—"

He choked miserably, and Miss Lydia reeled against the wainscoting.

"His boy?" she reiterated.

"Our boy, if you like," Obed said. "There needn't anybody ever know who his daddy was. We can keep the square as proud as ever, if you like."

"Obed, you're the best—the dearest—"

Miss Lydia choked, too, and turned away to the window at the head of the stair-case.

Across the street, lanterns bobbed excitedly, as if carried by a searching-party; a door slammed; and a shirt-sleeved arm pointed at the Claghorn porch.

Her brimming eyes fell upon the wooden image, opposite the house. Softened ineffably by the faint moonlight, the woman in the spiked crown seemed not to frown. Her silvery face was glorified, like that of a sculptured angel seen by night in a cathedral nave.

"Let everybody know, Obed" said Miss Lydia. "I want the whole island should know that you're the finest, forgivin'est Claghorn that ever breathed. Let's have 'em all know how love is got to be the empress of Figurehead Square."

IN LINE OF DUTY

BY EDWIN L. SABIN

SURVEYING the perspiring brute in his customary perplexed fashion, the old doctor ran his fingers through his unhygienic whiskers.

The whiskers did not matter much for a country doctor in the mountains; but the horse did. It was a handsome animal. He had bought it (applied on an ancient bill of "services rendered") from Davis the rancher over beyond Ute Creek. Davis had bluffly warranted the beast sound and willing and a good driver. So it was. But the doctor seemed to be a better judge of fractures and babies than of horses.

Prince turned out, if sound in body, unsound in temperament, wilful rather than willing, and a good driver when permitted to do the driving. No; he was no horse for an old country doctor of seventy.

Therefore, now regarding the brute, finally unharnessed after a perilous excursion which had landed the doctor in a state of nervous collapse worse than that of the patient whom he was visiting, the grizzled veteran rubbed his chin.

"I didn't think it," he mused, bewildered. "I didn't think that even Davis would play me such a trick. Confound him!"

Since the death of his wife the old doctor had lived on with his housekeeper in the same white cottage at the edge of town. Mrs. Brown was as plain as her name. She had been a mill-camp cook and a rancher's wife, and out of her Western experiences she knew horses. So now, coming in, the old doctor met the expected criticism.

"The first time I see that man Davis I'm going to tell him he ought to be ashamed of himself, putting off such a horse on an old man like you!" she announced roundly. "Nearly run away with you, didn't he?"

"N-no," denied the doctor, washing his hands at the sink. "Little wild, is all."

"Wild!" snorted Mrs. Brown. "Yes. I should rather say so. That horse isn't half broke. Davis himself couldn't hardly drive him, I hear. If I were you I'd make him take him back. Applying him on that bill! Huh! 'Twarn't no way to do."

Out of meekness and wisdom the doctor did not reply. A bargain was a bargain—or ought to be; and even if, under the circumstances, his conscience would O. K. his repudiation of the deal, a certain stubborn pride had forbidden. But he was aware that his guardian, the dutiful Mrs. Brown, held him in strong disapproval, and that all the town would view him indulgently. Confound Davis; confound him! To foist off a bad horse on an old man who had saved the lives of himself and his wife and his children — aye, and hadn't received a cent therefor.

The hot, quick sun passed the line-mark of noon and headed on as if to carry the light to the other side of the mountains. In his chair on the little front porch the doctor peacefully dozed off, a bandanna handkerchief over his face. He had learned thus to sleep between times. Of late he had required more sleep.

Clatter of galloping hoofs sounded in the street, but only the cessation thereof, at his gate, aroused him. 'Twas not the passing, but the halting, that was his signal.

He blinked hard and recognized the man who, having flung the lines over the post, was shambling up the short walk. Tall, lean, small-headed, his scraggly, unwholesome mustache stained with tobacco-juice, this was Davis.

"Doc! Can you come right away?"

"Where?"

"Out to the ranch."

"What's the matter?"

Davis stated, badly but anxiously. The case had aspect serious.

"How long'll it take you to hitch up?" he repeated.

"Just a moment. Wait." The doctor was scribbling on his pad. "Here. You go with this to the drug-store. They'll have it in stock. And when you get home—" and rapidly, but clearly, he outlined to Davis an emergency treatment.

"Yes. I'll go ahead, then. You know the way?"

"Out to the ranch, isn't it?"

"Yes. Sure. You know, I guess. But the horse'll take you there. He'll remember." And vaulting into his saddle, Davis galloped away.

The horse! He could persist in recommending the horse, could he? Well!

Alert, but irritated, the doctor bestirred himself. He hastened into the office for his instruments and other equipment. Mrs. Brown called through to him.

"Was that Davis again?"

"Yes," admitted the doctor with rising inflection, and bustling busily.

"Wants you out to the ranch?"

"Yes."

"Clear out there! Suppose you're going."

"Yes," confessed the doctor for the third time.

"Humph! You do beat all," scolded Mrs. Brown, appearing in the doorway. "Why didn't you just simply tell him that horse isn't safe, and you've got no way of getting out there. 'Twould have served him right."

"Oh, I can drive the horse," hastily defended the doctor. "This is a case that won't bear waiting long."

"Well, at least when you do get there you can tell him what you think of him. You make him keep the horse. *I'd* like to see and tell him."

"I will," asserted the old doctor, suddenly firing up over the way in which he was being imposed upon. "I'll tell him. By George, we'll have some sort of an understanding."

"Don't you forget now," warned Mrs. Brown after him.

No, he would not forget; and almost angrily he tossed his cases into the buggy and proceeded to harness up. During his whirl through the town while bystanders stared and applauded, his vexation did not evaporate any. Hanging hard to the vicious animal, he grimly set his teeth.

"Let her go, doc!" yelped a delighted irrepressible.

The foot-hills beyond town were tawny and clear, but the range behind them was early wearing its nightcaps of cloud. The Davis ranch would be a good sixteen miles over the first divide and well-nigh into the range itself. He ought to make it before dusk.

The horse pulled strongly and, as usual, soon the old doctor's arms were aching. There was the nervous strain, too, besides the strain upon muscles. The pesky brute shied where appeared nothing at which to shy; and he seemed constantly to have a break-away up his metaphorical sleeve. Never a moment that he did not require watching.

As the miles were spasmodically reeled off, the old doctor found himself waxing more and more incensed. To be inflicted with such a horse on an errand of mercy to the very culprit, was rather more than even the spirit of country doctor should stand.

He mentally rehearsed over and over the speech that should make Davis ashamed, or sorry, or mad.

As gradually they climbed, the cloud-line dropped to meet them. It portended an early night and a wet one. The sun dimmed; and at the top of the divide the fog, as a soft mass, clogged eyes and ears, and subdued even the horse. While they lost time the doctor might ease his aching wrists and breathe another anathema against Davis.

They should be descending into the valley where awaited the ranch and the patient; but the road continued, with every fresh turn another disappointment. It was a lonely trail, particularly in the fog. Fain would the doctor have met somebody, of whom to inquire distance.

He noted a set of bars, closing a road leading off to one side, which had recently been traveled by a vehicle. The doctor pulled up short, and tying his horse to the fence entered through the bars to ask questions. A half-mile of anxious trudging amidst the wetness and the vagueness brought him against a deserted claim-cabin, tightly boarded. Whoever had come in ahead of him also had gone out again. With muttered denouncement of himself for his error the doctor retraced his steps.

He arrived by the bars just at the psychological moment to send his horse careering down the road, dragging the buggy and leaving the remnant of the hitching-strap. Off he went, first at trot, then, as the doctor, running after, yelled whoa, at a gallop.

Out of breath, puffing, the doctor must slacken and walk. The buggy had disappeared, taking his medicines and his instruments with it. He plodded anxiously on, hoping that the horse might stop of his own accord, or be stopped by somebody or something. Perspiring, angry, dismayed, the doctor put best foot forward, but the trail ever opened unfrequented, and presently he found himself trudging along in the dusk.

The country was strange to him. By all the gods of war, but he was lost! Timber skirted both sides of the trail; upon either hand rolled away the darkening, misted hills. Now thunder boomed amidst the wooded heights. It was not a pleasant situation for any traveler; and vexed beyond measure, the doctor berated Davis and the horse, and himself for being a fool.

The prospect of spending such a night in the open was not attractive to him, old campaigner that he had been. However, he could descry no beckoning light; he could descry not a sign of human habitation. A fitful volley of large drops pricked him to doing something definite; hastily veering to his left he sought in the timber for the first low-branching spruce that offered shelter. In the darkening depths he found it, and under it he crept. The night and the rain closed about him.

The quarters were close; the treacherous fronds leaked ever in new spots; and he spent miserable hours, now dozing and anon squirming fretfully to strike better position. An old man cramped and crimped and bedraggled, at tardy dawn forth he crawled into the promise of sunshine. All the timber was wet, high and low, and he was much relieved when, heading at random, he emerged at last upon the open sod.

Now he knew where he was. At least, he thought he did. The fog and the dark had substituted for his country a changeling; but the faithful sun had brought his bearings back again. He recognized that mountain yonder. The road to town ran along its base. He saw the road. Good! He had chance of release from his difficulties.

A team, drawing a wagon, jogged into view, the team of a rancher bound, like as not, for town. The doctor, hurrying, felt his star to be in the ascendent. It was impossible for him to get to the Davises; impossible. He, an old man, ought not to be called upon to imperil himself with a horse like that. Davis had only his own rascality to blame. Yes, they must do without him, by Jupiter. And as he hurried on he protested hotly.

At his gesture the approaching wagon halted. The doctor, climbing through the fence, hailed pantingly:

" Good morning."

" Good morning."

He was being eyed curiously.

" What road is this?"

" This is the Ophir road. Going to town? Get aboard."

" Where's the Davis ranch, then?"

" The Davis ranch? Why, that's about three miles back."

" Thanks."

The wagon rolled on in the one direction; the doctor hastened on in the other. He was not surprised by his unpremeditated course. It had been the logical thing to do. He was nerved up to demonstrate to Davis what he thought of him. The hour was opportune. Davis? Con-*found* Davis!

Meantime, what of Mrs. Davis, the patient? Well, no matter. But how had they got along without him he wondered? Panting onward, suddenly he caught himself worrying. Tut tut! That would not do. Fifty years of doctoring should have taught him not to worry over patients. He was not now the ministering angel, anyway; he was the avenging angel, by heavens! Let Davis mark, see, hear, and learn what dependence upon such a horse meant to a doctor and an old man.

The rods flowed past; but the miles were long after a night under a spruce and a morning without breakfast. Wasn't that the Davis place, around this last turn? Yes, he was certain of it: the yellow house set a quarter of a mile from the road, at the farther end of a lane through the hayland.

He was figuring again, reviewing the possibilities of the case (Mrs. Davis's case), and hoping that all had gone, or was going right. Well, tut! If he was too late he was too late—but not, he trusted, too late for asserting his own claims.

The Davis place it was. He turned in at the lane and walked rapidly down and through the yard. Everything was quiet, as if no great event of life or death had preceded him. The front door was closed, and he knocked in vain; so he passed around, to hear singing in the kitchen.

It was a stranger woman there. The doctor stammered, taken aback:

" Don't the Davises live here?"

" No, sir. They moved out three months ago."

" Where?"

" Why, it's about six miles from here, on the crossroad. Are — are you the doctor?"

" Yes. Have you got a phone?"

" No, sir."

" Got a horse?"

" No, sir; not here. My son, he took one team and went to town, and the other team's hired out. My husband's over at Davis's now."

" Didn't see anything of a horse and buggy, did you?"

" Yes, sir. Was that yours? We thought it was Davis's. My husband found it at the gate early, when he went out; it had a doctor's case in it and he didn't know what to do, so's he took it all over to Davis's."

" Thunder!" muttered the doctor, seeing red again. " Davis didn't tell me he'd moved. Six miles? Which direction?"

" It's on the crossroad, going south from the main road. We usually short-cut around that hill yonder and save quite a bit."

" Thank you. Good day."

" Won't you stop and have something to eat?" called the woman, aroused.

Trudging off, the doctor shook his head over his shoulder.

The short-cut, if such it might be styled, was no sinecure of a trail for tired feet and empty stomach and seventy years. But the impatience of anxious physician supplemented the zest of outraged man; and each restored the flagging energies of the other. Nevertheless, when the doctor descended the hill to the Davises' new ranch he staggered a bit in his sturdy stride.

The horse—that *damnable* horse—still attached to the buggy, was standing at the fence in front of the house. Without pausing to seize his case, the doctor pushed through the swinging gate. The door of the house was opened to his hand, and he stared questioningly at Davis.

" Well, doc! What happened to you?"

" What happened to me? What—your confounded horse — no matter yet," croaked the old doctor, gamely. " What's happened here, I want to know?"

" You're so darned late, we had to get along without you," accused Davis. " But I guess it's all right."

" All right! Where is she?"

Davis grinned and nodded.

" In there. Say, doc," he added in lower tone, " you ain't goin' to charge me up for this visit, are you? You didn't *get* here."

" We'll talk about that, and some other matters, when I come out," rebuked the doctor.

He must postpone his excoriations; and, disregarding Davis he slipped on into the adjoining room.

Here was a sallow-faced woman in bed. Here were two other women, earnestly gazing.

" Well, if it ain't Dr. Powers, after all!" exclaimed the one. " Doctor, you're late. What kept you? Must have had an accident."

" Accident! That confounded—" he began angrily, conscious of his appearance and presumptive guilt. But he was not permitted to finish. Something interrupted—the high-pitched cry of an infant; and the dull face on the pillow turned toward him languidly, and invitingly.

" Well, well," he managed to say.

Advancing, he deftly folded back the covers. There it was—wrinkled and red and helpless. His hot anger melted into chagrin. He had been forestalled. But—but he could not blame *it* or her. He was too late. The proof was undeniable.

He mechanically took the patient's wrist for her pulse.

" Feeling all right?" he queried, closely scanning the face.

The patient nodded, and gently smiled.

" Boy?" he asked.

The patient shook her head.

" Girl," she whispered.

" She wanted a girl. *He* wanted a *boy*," one of the women informed him.

Wanly the patient smiled. The baby piped. The others looked on.

There were, of course, some details remaining, some instructions to be given, even if he had been too late; for he was a careful old doctor. Davis clumped in; several tow-headed children sidled after.

" All right, doc?"

"As far as I can tell. Everything seems so."

"What'd you do? Get lost?"

The doctor's choler rose. He felt his face reddening with righteous wrath.

"You didn't tell me you'd moved."

"Pshaw, now. Didn't I?" answered Davis. "Well, I'd ought to. Say, doc," he asked, "what's a feller to do when he wants a boy and all he gets is a girl?"

"It's too late to do anything except make the best of it."

"*She* wanted it," reasserted one of the women.

"Oh, *she* wanted it," granted Davis contemptuously. Anybody might have thought, from the tone being used, that the woman in the bed could not understand plain English. "Wanted it to help about the housework, she said. Wanted a girl. But God Almighty, where do I come in on the deal? She can do the work, I reckon. But what you want on a ranch is boys. They're the handy kids."

"You've got two growin' up," one of the two women reminded him.

"Yes, and I could use a dozen."

"Well, she wanted *one* girl."

"She's got it," growled Davis. "There it is."

The woman in the bed had been listening, with eyes traveling from speaker to speaker. Now she beckoned, and the doctor went forward to her. Suddenly, gazing down into the sallowness, the lineaments so oft emptied of hope, the doctor in a moment read a full history of married life. She whispered:

"Did the horse run away with you?"

"Aw, don't insult the doc," rebuked Davis. "Look at here, doc. She said I ought not to sell you that horse. It's been troublin' her, jest because she was afraid to drive him. All he did was break his hitchin'-strap, didn't he, and make for home?"

"It's run away with me," pursued the woman—and the two other women, at the corner of the doctor's eye, appeared to nod confirmation. "You must take it back, John. Can't you? 'Tain't fair."

"Then you'll drive him again, by jiminy!" retorted Davis with an ugly laugh. "I've got use for my other horses. Understand that."

Her faded eyes widened, as in awakening terror. She seemed instinctively to clutch tightly the babe beside her.

"No, sir-ee," spoke at once the old doctor. "A bargain's a bargain. The horse is mine. I like it."

"But it'll run away with you, doctor," quavered the woman.

"No, no, it won't," the doctor assured her.

"Jest because she's afraid of him herself she thinks everybody ought to be afraid of him," announced Davis, rudely sarcastic. "She's too blamed timid, anyhow; and if the horse comes back she'll have to drive him, or walk. Understand? But the doctor ain't complainin'. Are you, doc? Our accounts are square now. I ain't got ready money for no doctor bills. He's a good enough horse, soon as you get used to him."

"No, your wife must not worry over that," asserted the doctor. "A bargain's a bargain, and I've got the horse. He's a splendid horse; suits me exactly. She can't have him back. She can't work me that way," and he laughed. "And—she—must—not—worry. Wait until the young men begin flocking about to carry off that daughter!"

She stared up questioningly at him. In all candor, with the ingenuousness from fifty years' practise in dissembling, he gazed back.

She sighed, almost happily.

"I guess you're speakin' the truth," she whispered. "I'll not worry, then." And with a smile on her thin lips, she closed her eyes to sleep.

The doctor hastily tiptoed out. Davis followed.

"You agreed not to charge for this trip, didn't you?" he hazarded brazenly. "But you'd better wait for noon and get somethin' to eat."

"No, not to-day. I must be going back," and the doctor continued on out to the horse and buggy.

"Well, I fed your horse, anyway," called after him Davis. "I take good care of my animals, you bet."

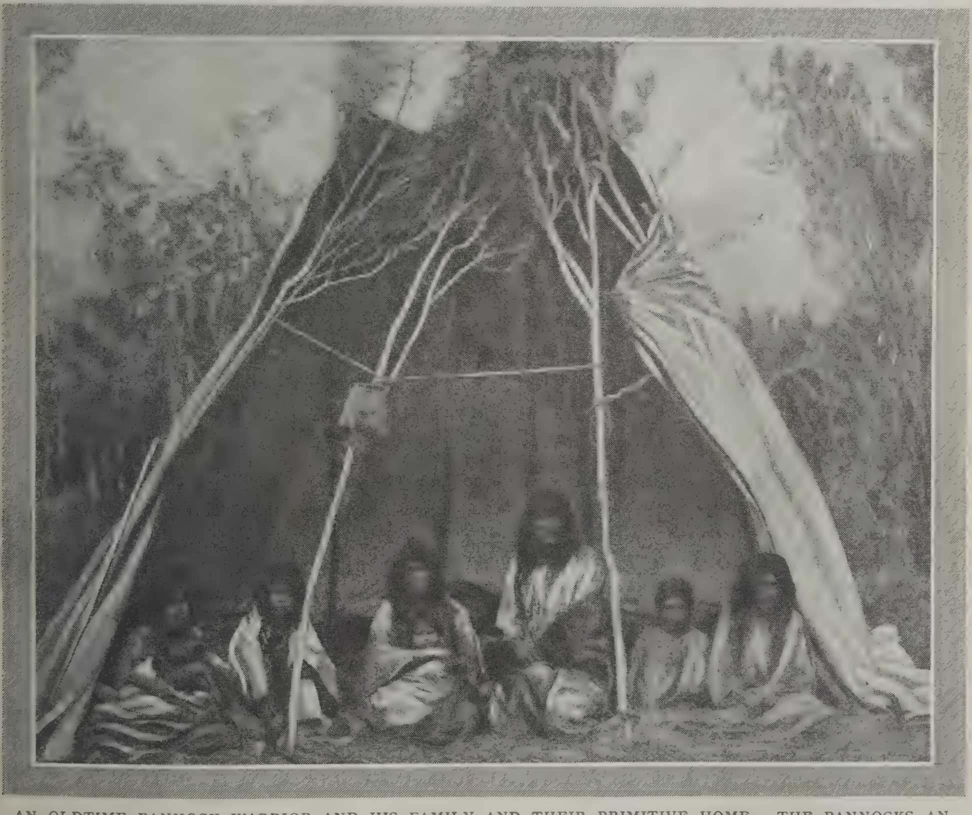
The doctor had slipped the halter and was in the buggy. Grasping very firmly the lines, he boldly clucked and nerved himself against the homeward trip. He had been gone a long time; he was faint and achy; he had left many things unsaid; Mrs. Brown would be watching expectantly for him, he probably was an old fool, but he rather thought that he had done his duty.

THE PASSING OF THE OLD INDIAN

BY JOHN M. OSKISON

THOUGH the reports of agents and superintendents confirm the census figures which show that the number of Indians in the United States is slowly increasing, the real Indians are disappearing. There are 305,000 individuals classified by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as Indians, though the number claiming Indian citizenship by blood is not above 276,000; of that number only 150,000 are known as full-bloods—and a considerable proportion of the so-called pure blood have some admixture of white blood.

Within historical times the Indian population of the United States decreased from a total of 850,000 (the estimate of the most



AN OLDTIME BANNOCK WARRIOR AND HIS FAMILY AND THEIR PRIMITIVE HOME. THE BANNOCKS, AN OFFSHOOT OF THE SHOSHONI INDIANS, WERE ONCE A NUMEROUS TRIBE AND OCCUPIED THE REGION OF WESTERN WYOMING AND EASTERN IDAHO. TO-DAY THEY ARE FEW IN NUMBER

Courtesy of Seth K. Humphrey

HOLLOW HORN BEAR, A MODERN CHIEF OF THE SIOUX, WHO DIED MARCH 15, 1913, IN A WASHINGTON, D. C., HOSPITAL FROM PNEUMONIA, WHICH DEVELOPED FROM A COLD CAUGHT WHILE HE WAS ATTENDING THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT WILSON

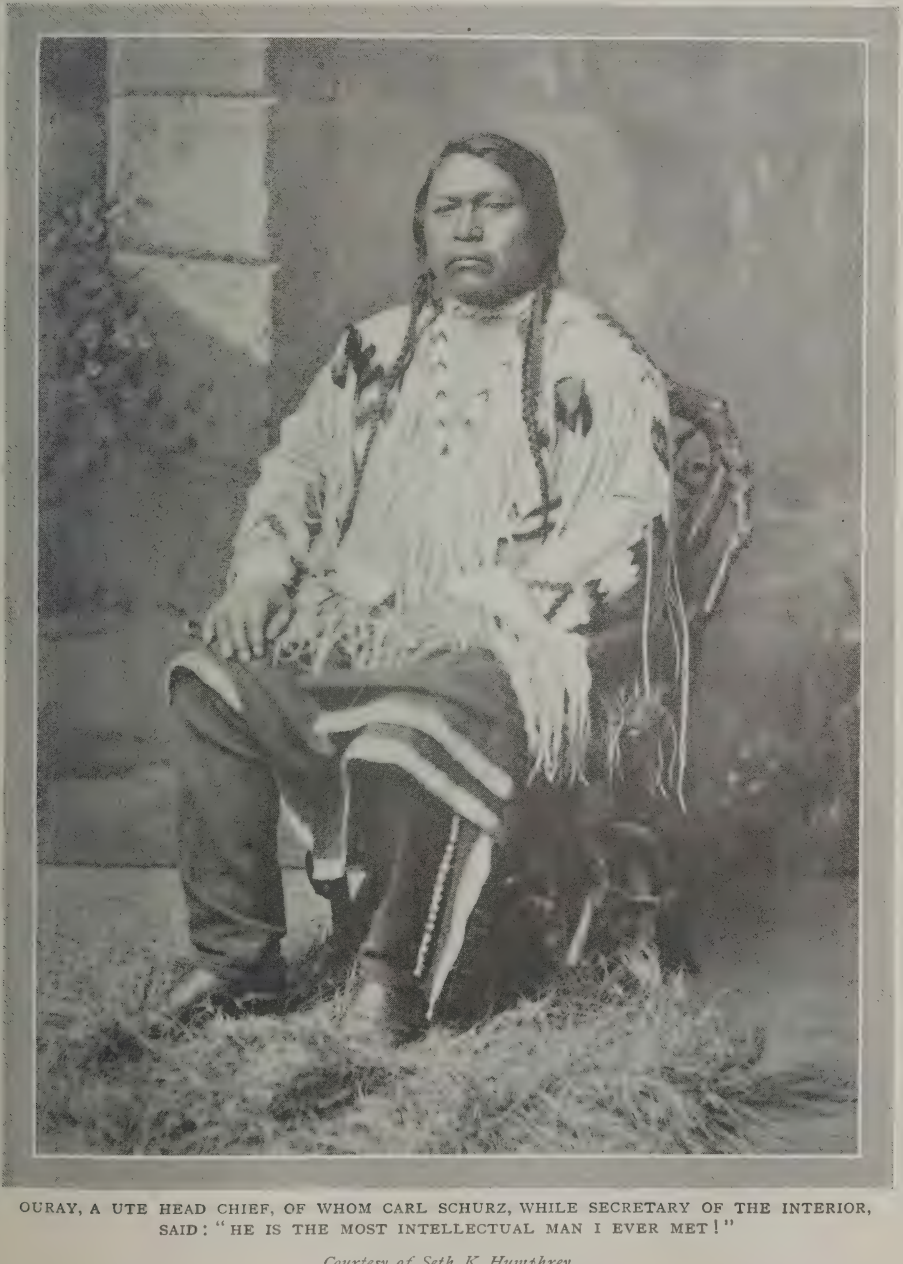
Photograph by G. V. Buck, Washington, D. C.

reliable researchers) to about 250,000; and then, within the last thirty years, there has come a slow increase—not of the old, pure-blood Indians, but of the mixed-bloods who make up the larger portion of the race as it is constituted to-day.

The Indian birth rate is lower than that for all races (the figures are 30.2 and 35.1 per thousand), and the Indian death rate is much higher (24 as compared with 15 per thousand). This is true of the birth and death rate of to-day. Of course, after their first contact with the whites, epidemics of smallpox and other contagious diseases, tuberculosis, whisky, starvation and the results of warfare swept the Indians away at a rate ten times higher than the normal.

Making up his estate to-day, the Indian holds possession of 161 reservations with an area of about 55,000,000 acres; the government holds in trust for him $42,000,000; his timber lands are valued at over $84,000,000; mineral wealth on the reservations has been as yet only roughly estimated—it probably exceeds $100,000,000. In land and personal property, the Indian is worth about $680,000,000.

Ninety tribes have survived the quick changes which have come over the Indians since they have been compelled to adjust themselves to another civilization. They

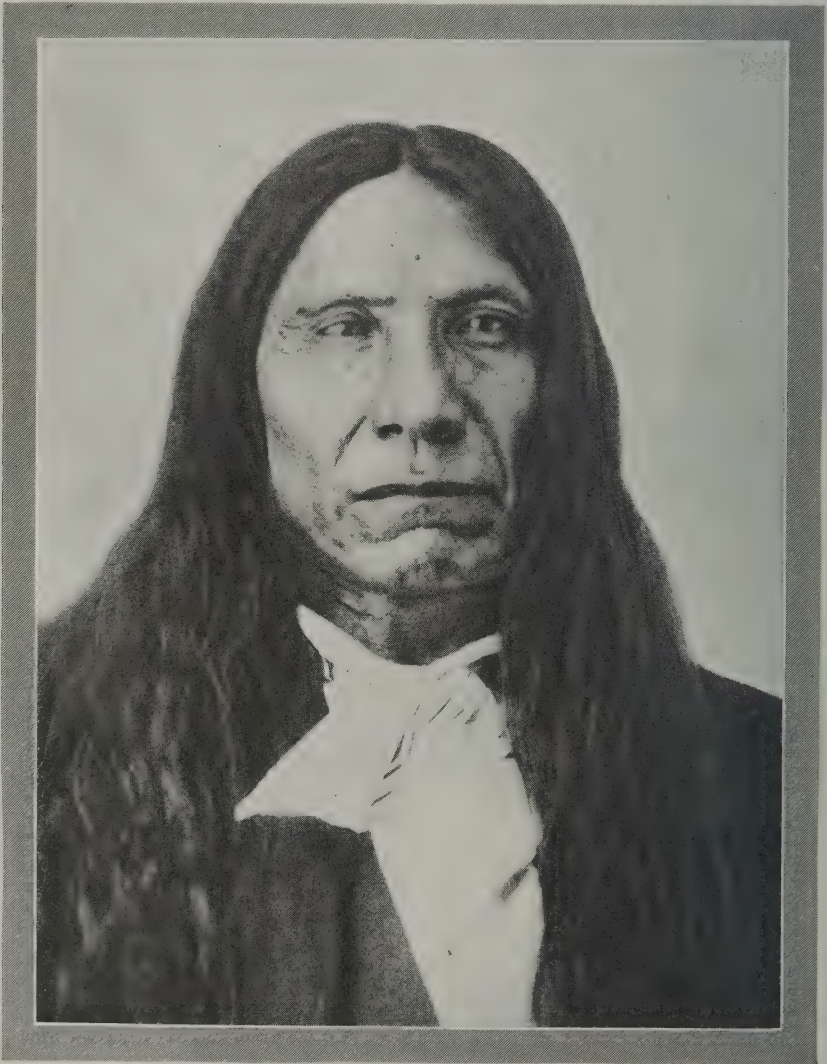


OURAY, A UTE HEAD CHIEF, OF WHOM CARL SCHURZ, WHILE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, SAID: "HE IS THE MOST INTELLECTUAL MAN I EVER MET!"

Courtesy of Seth K. Humphrey

are scattered over thirty-six States, but twenty States hold nearly all of them. With something more than 30,000 members, the Navahos, of Arizona and New Mexico, are to-day the most numerous tribe of pure-bloods. In the last twenty-five years, their increase has been rapid and their prosperity great; and their contact with the whites has been slight. Among the various Sioux groups are counted about 28,000—and comparatively few are of the mixed-blood class. The Chippewa groups—more mixed in blood than the Sioux—number 17,000; on half a dozen reservations live about 6,000 Apaches and the same number of Papagos—both tribes still retaining practically untouched their Indian traditions and blood.

Largest of all in actual numbers, the Cherokees of Oklahoma are the most advanced in the process of amalgamation. Of the more than 31,000 blood members of that tribe, a liberal estimate of the full-blood population does not go beyond 5,000; and an educated Cherokee who has made a careful study of the histories of the



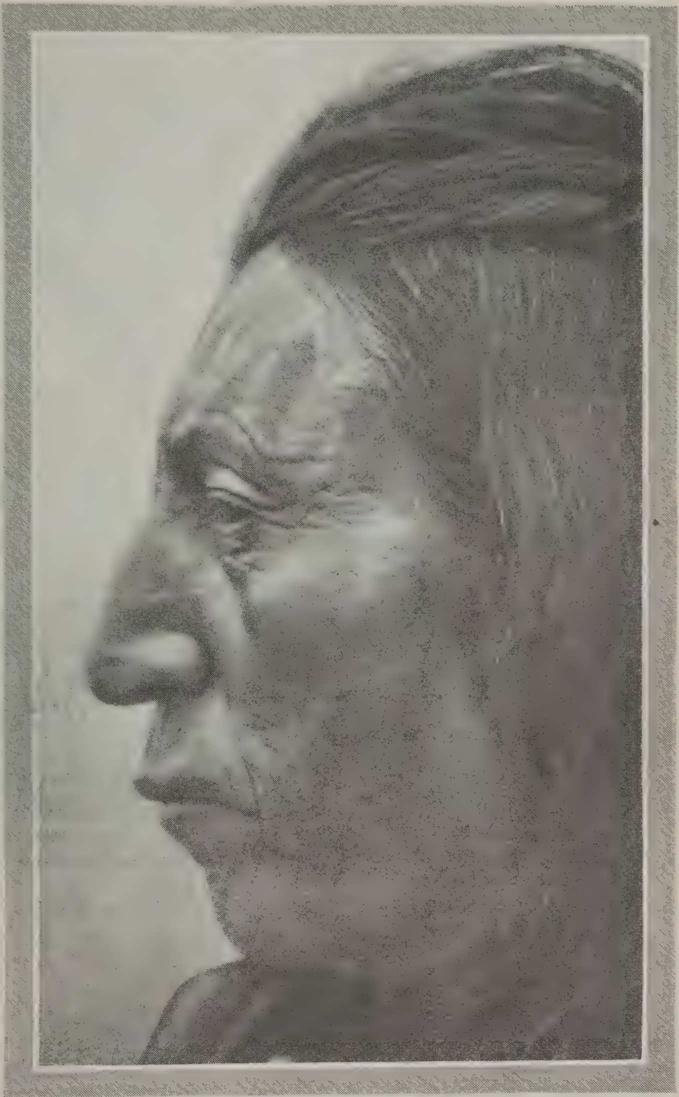
RED CLOUD, THE LAST OF THE GREAT OGALALA SIOUX CHIEFS. IN 1865 HE LED 2,000 MEN AGAINST THE WHITES, BUT HE DIED IN 1909, AGED 87, A STANCH SUPPORTER OF PEACE

Courtesy of Seth K. Humphrey

principal families in the tribe says that there are not a hundred Cherokees in whose veins some white blood does not flow. Nearly as much mixed are the others of the Five Tribes—the Choctaws, with a membership of 26,600, the Chickasaws, with 11,000, the Creeks, with 18,700, and the Seminoles of Oklahoma, with 3,100.

What a century of close association with whites has done to destroy the Indian identity of the Five Civilized Tribes, another half-century will have accomplished with praccally every tribe in the United States. Already the old type of Indian—the plains leader and camp-fire statesman, the mighty hunter and the poet-keeper of legends—has gone; and in two more generations the Indian as a distinctive person will be all but a memory.

Thirty years of the reservation system has seen the inglorious passing of the old Indian. He was rounded in from the plains and the mountains, a man of resources, of energy, of character. He sat idle on the reservation for a generation and more, and the stages of degeneration he passed through left him a soiled relic of his old self.



ANOTHER PICTURE OF RED CLOUD, SHOWING HIS STRONG PROFILE. AS A WARRIOR HE STOOD FIRST AMONG HIS PEOPLE. HE ROSE TO THE CHIEFTAINCY BY SHEER ABILITY AND WAS A DELEGATE TO WASHINGTON SEVERAL TIMES IN HIS CEASELESS FIGHT TO WIN FOR THE INDIANS THEIR RIGHTS

Photograph by Paul Thompson, New York

But out of the corrupt soil of the reservation system has grown a new type of Indian—the one who intermarries with his white neighbor, who goes to school, raises cattle and horses, opens up and cultivates farms, learns a white man's trade and works at it. More than 200,000 Indians live on individual allotments of land, more than 40,000 are voters, and 194,000 are taxed and occupy permanent homes. Today the government agents report that 70,000 Indians are farmers and stock raisers; and 8,700 are in government employ. Fewer than fifty per cent of the whole Indian population are illiterate, and not quite twenty-five per cent are as yet unable to talk or understand English. For the education of the rising generation of

A GROUP OF PRESENT DAY OLD MEN AT THE SEGER, OKLAHOMA, MISSION. THEY ARE OF THE SOUTHERN CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES, AND ARE FARMERS AND CATTLE RAISERS

Indians the government spends $4,000,000 a year and supports 111 boarding schools and 223 day schools. Various churches and religious societies conduct fifty-seven Indian schools; in all, 58,000 Indian children are in school; and more would be if there were more schools.

In another ten years, 90 per cent of all our Indians will have become tax-payers; politically, their absorption into American life will then be nearly complete. Another generation ought to see the end of the reservation system.

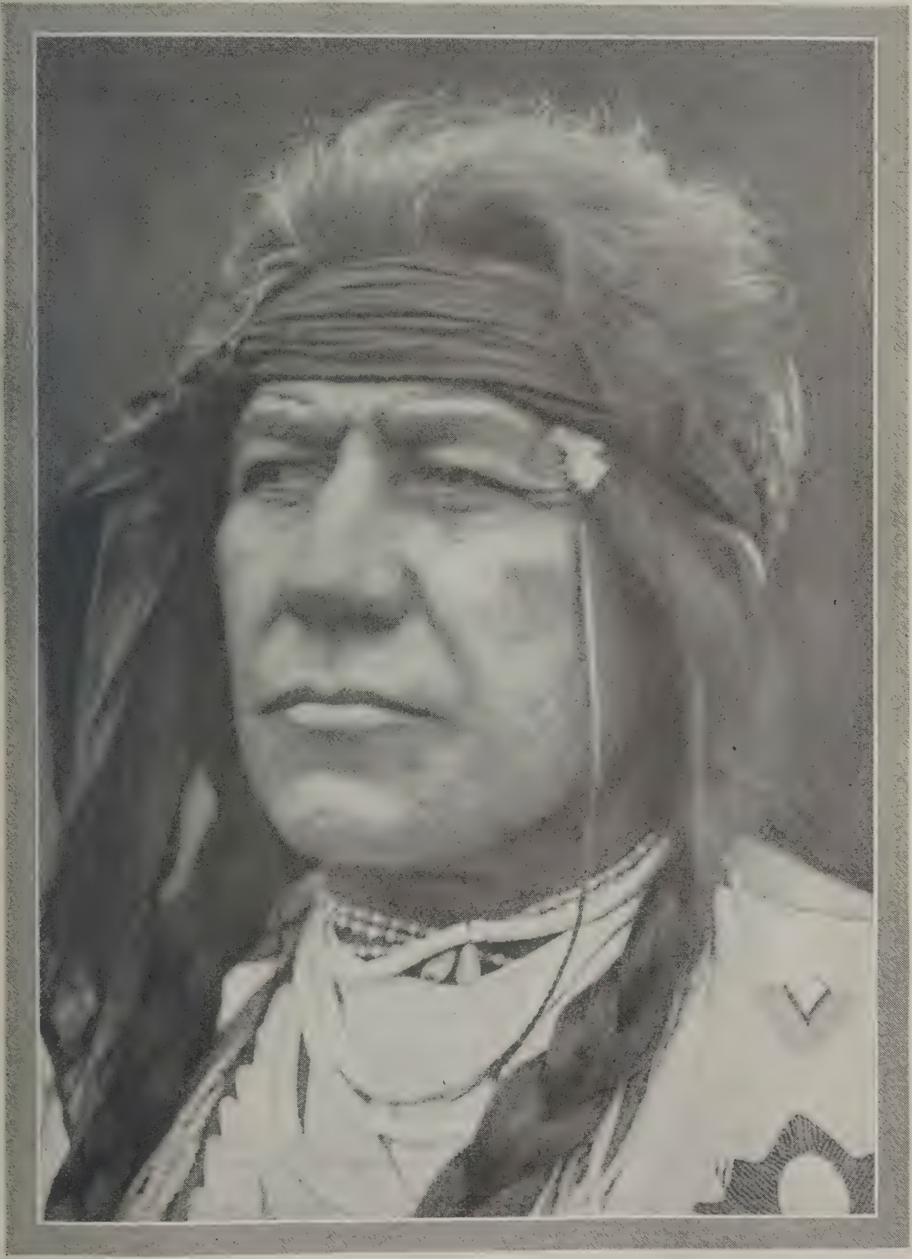
So, the American Indian is entering upon the final stage of his history; and what a lurid, picturesque history it has been!

His very origin is deep hidden in the mists of guesses and traditions. The romanticist has had his turn in explaining the presence on this continent of the Indian, and the scientists have delved to no purpose.

First of those who published their speculations about the origin of the Indians were those who sought piously to discover among them traces of the "lost tribes of Israel"—and that theory was promulgated as early as the discovery that the newly found continent was not connected with Asia.

How could they get here, and who were their ancestors? Two intensely interesting questions. Explorers found customs, scraps of ceremonials, fragments of speech which seemed to point to an Oriental origin; very early in American history a Welsh preacher said that he had found certain Indians who knew his language, and an attempt was made to trace across the continent the evidence to establish a claim that Prince Madoc established a Welsh colony in North America as early as 1170, and to show that the Indians came from that stock. By other explorers and theorists their origin has been traced to the Irish, the Greeks, Phœnecians, Polynesians, Australasians, the Japanese, the Chinese.

One of the theories which has persisted is that the Indians are of Asiatic origin, that they crossed the Behring Strait and flowed down across what is now Alaska and the Dominion of Canada. Among various tribes, traditions tell of migrations from indefinite directions at periods so remote that nothing but vague memories have survived. But at the end of every path of investigation the scientific searcher

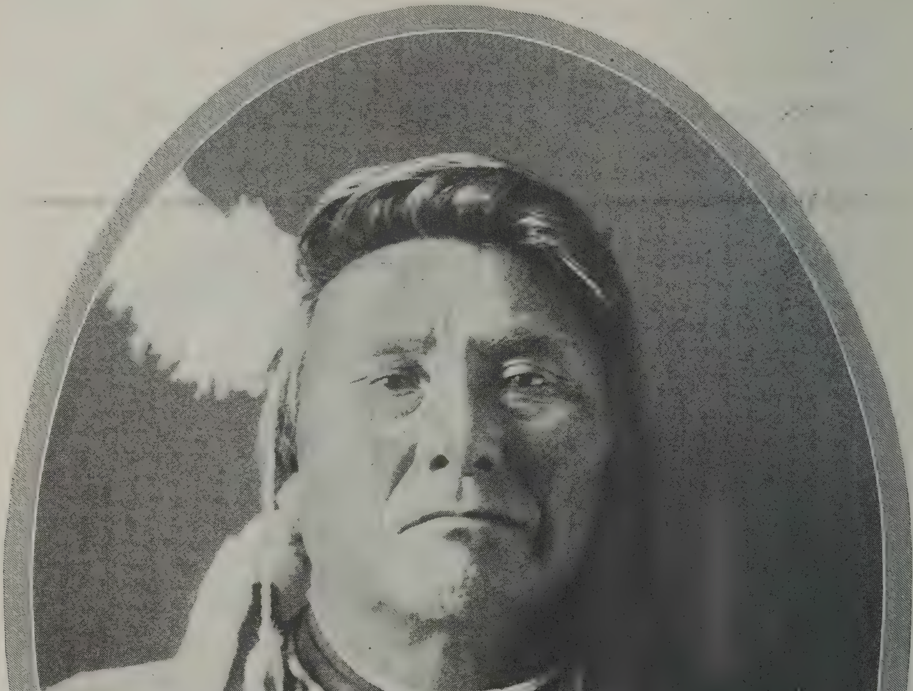


CRANE-IN-THE-SKY, A MODERN LEADER OF THE CROW TRIBE. HE IS ONE WHO IS INDUCING HIS PEOPLE TO TAKE UP MODERN TOOLS AND BECOME A PART OF THE CIVILIZATION OF THEIR DAY

Photograph by Paul Thompson, New York

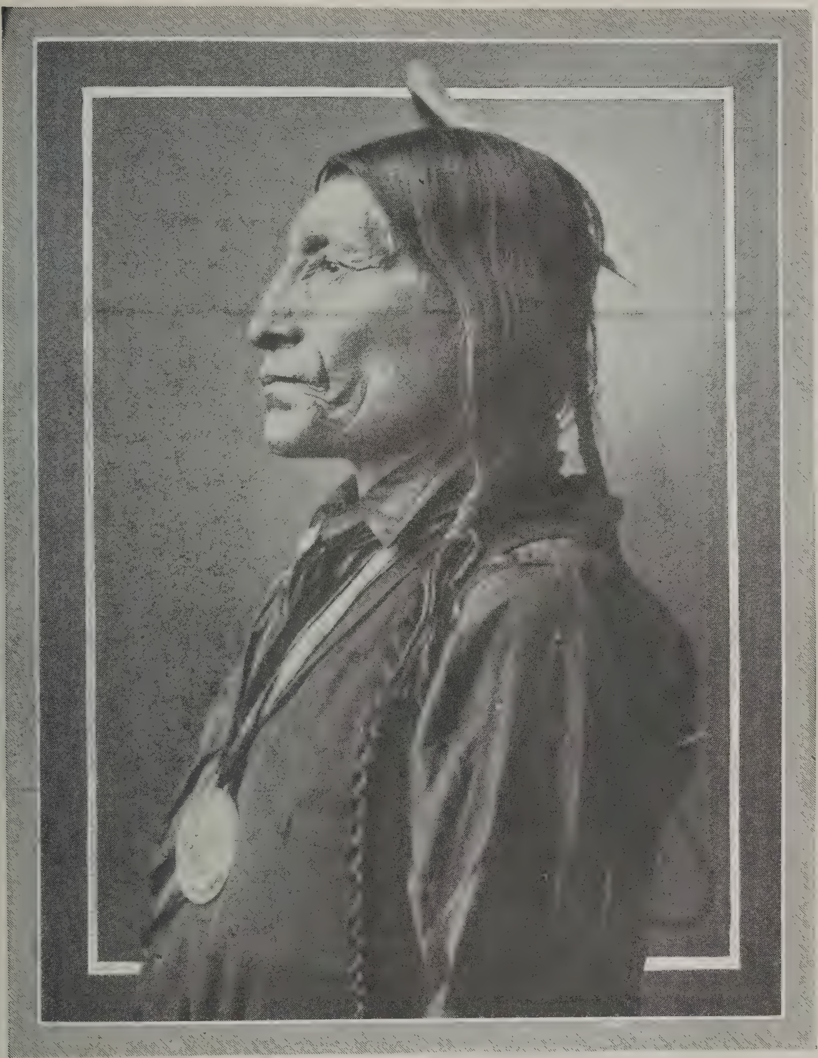
has found—nothing but theory! Similarities of language are wholly accidental; and the world-student of racial development finds that similar institutions, and even industrial products develop among similarly placed people at opposite ends of the earth.

Whatever his origin, the old Indian became an individual forceful and picturesque. He appealed to the sympathy and to the imagination alike. From Dekanawida, who with Hiawatha founded the confederation of the five Iroquoin tribes in the



CHIEF JOSEPH, FAMOUS LEADER OF THE NEZ PERCÉS IN PEACE AS WELL AS IN WAR. HIS CONDUCT OF THE NEZ PERCÉS' 1,000-MILE RETREAT TOWARD CANADA IN THE OUTBREAK OF 1877 IS WORTHY TO BE RANKED WITH THE RETREAT OF XENOPHON'S TEN THOUSAND

Courtesy of Seth K. Humphrey



A CHEYENNE CHIEF OF STRIKING COUNTENANCE. ORIGINALLY AN AGRICULTURAL TRIBE LIVING EAST OF THE MISSOURI, THE CHEYENNES (FROM THE SIOUX WORD "SHAHI-YENA," MEANING PEOPLE OF ALIEN SPEECH), WERE FORCED WEST BY THE SIOUX, WHO, IN TURN RETREATED BEFORE THE CHIPPEWAS' FIREARMS. DRIVEN TO THE PLAINS, THE CHEYENNES BECAME NOTED AS BUFFALO HUNTERS

Courtesy of Seth K. Humphrey

fifteenth century, to Red Cloud, last survivor of the strong Sioux leaders, who died in 1909, the race has furnished real statesmen and strong war captains. In the American Revolution, the names of Red Jacket, Cornplanter, and Joseph Brant (Thayendanega) became known as those of a great orator, a great war chief, and a great peacemaker respectively. It was Red Jacket who said:

"The Indians can never be civilized; they are not like white men. . . . We are few and weak, but may for a long time be happy if we hold fast to our country and the religion of our fathers." Throughout his life Red Jacket stood firm for the right of the Indians to go on living as their forefathers had lived.

A century earlier (in 1675-76), Metacom, son of Massasoit, led the Indians of New England against the Colonists in a desperate and all but successful attempt to

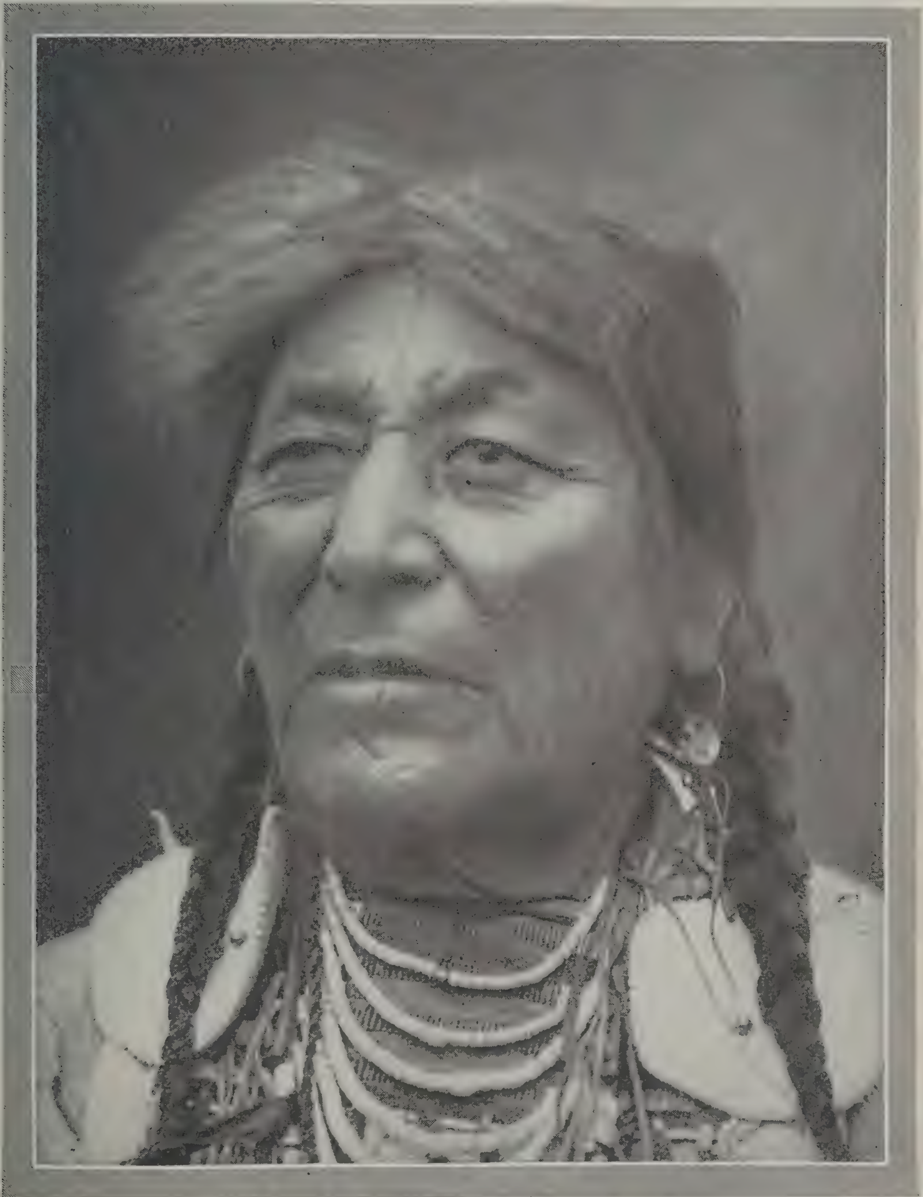
A PROFILE WHOSE EVERY LINE SHOWS STRENGTH—LITTLE WOLF, A CHEYENNE CHIEF—ONE OF THE PARTY OF NORTHERN CHEYENNES WHO, IN THE WINTER OF 1878-79, FOUGHT THEIR WAY OUT OF THE FORT RENO RESERVATION, IN INDIAN TERRITORY, WHERE THEY HAD BEEN COLONIZED. LITTLE WOLF IS THE TYPE OF THE INDIAN WHO IS PASSING

Photograph by Paul Thompson, New York

exterminate the whites. Because of his qualities of leadership he came to be known to the whites—and to later history—as King Philip. For nine years before King Philip opened his campaign against the Colonists, whom he regarded as hostile invaders, he remained friendly in order to study with care the strength, resources and location of every settlement. When his plans were ready, and he had completed the formation of a confederacy of tribes, he struck swiftly and hard. Almost simultaneously, fifty-two of the ninety towns of the Colonists were attacked, and twelve were completely destroyed. Philip's failure to exterminate the Colonists was due to treachery amongst his followers—through that one failure, he missed setting up for a time a real Indian kingdom on the ashes of the destroyed towns.

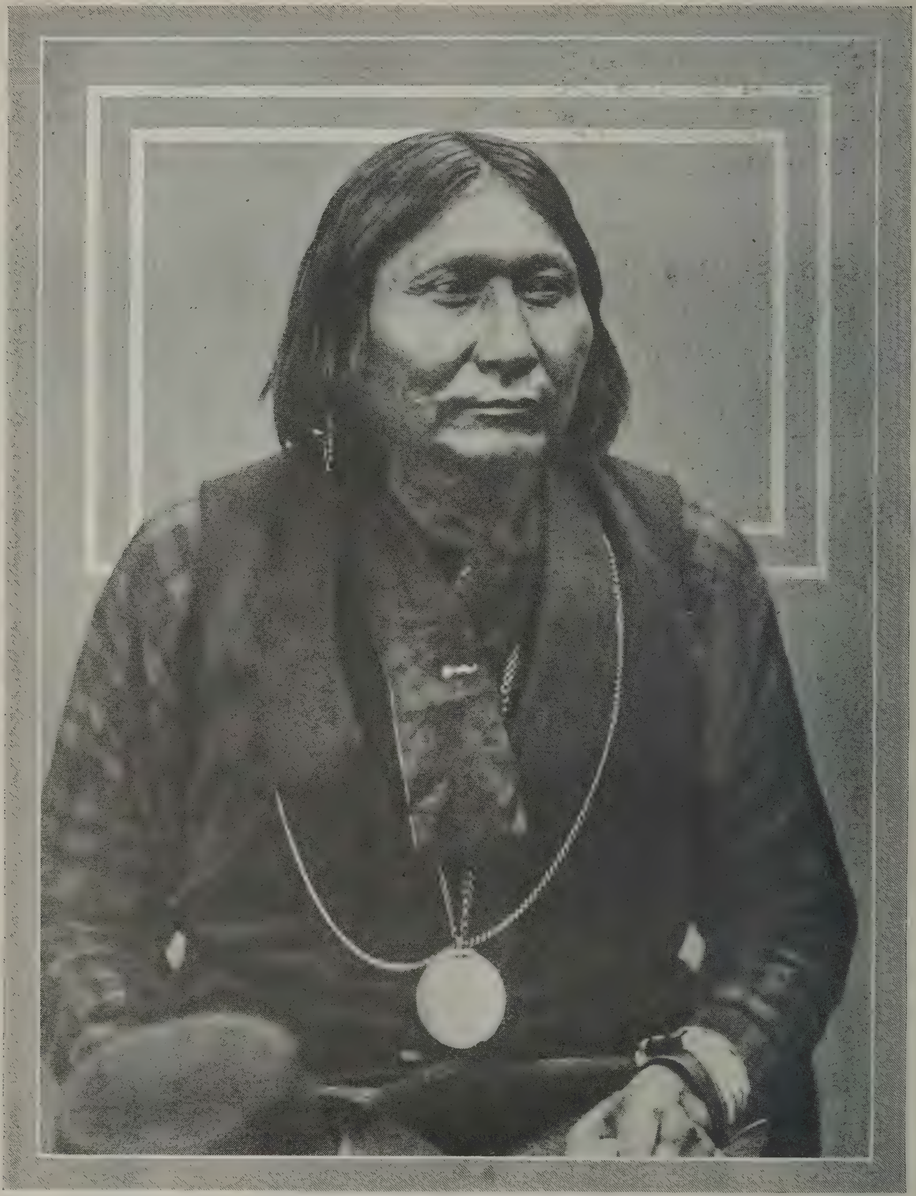
Osceola, the Seminole leader in the war of 1835, was seized under a flag of truce by the soldiers of the United States who had been driven back time after time by his warriors; and after three years of imprisonment died at the age of thirty-five—not before a blaze of public indignation was kindled against his captors and his own name made an inspiration to the Indians who later fought to drive back a civilization they hated and feared.

Tecumseh, like Philip, was another Indian who dreamed of a great confederation of tribes which should be powerful



ANOTHER STRONG FACE—PLENTY COOS, A CHIEF OF THE CROW TRIBE. HIS NAME IS A CORRUPTION OF "PLENTY COUPS" AND CELEBRATES HIS SUCCESS IN BATTLE IN MAKING "COUPS" OR TELLING BLOWS AGAINST THE ENEMY

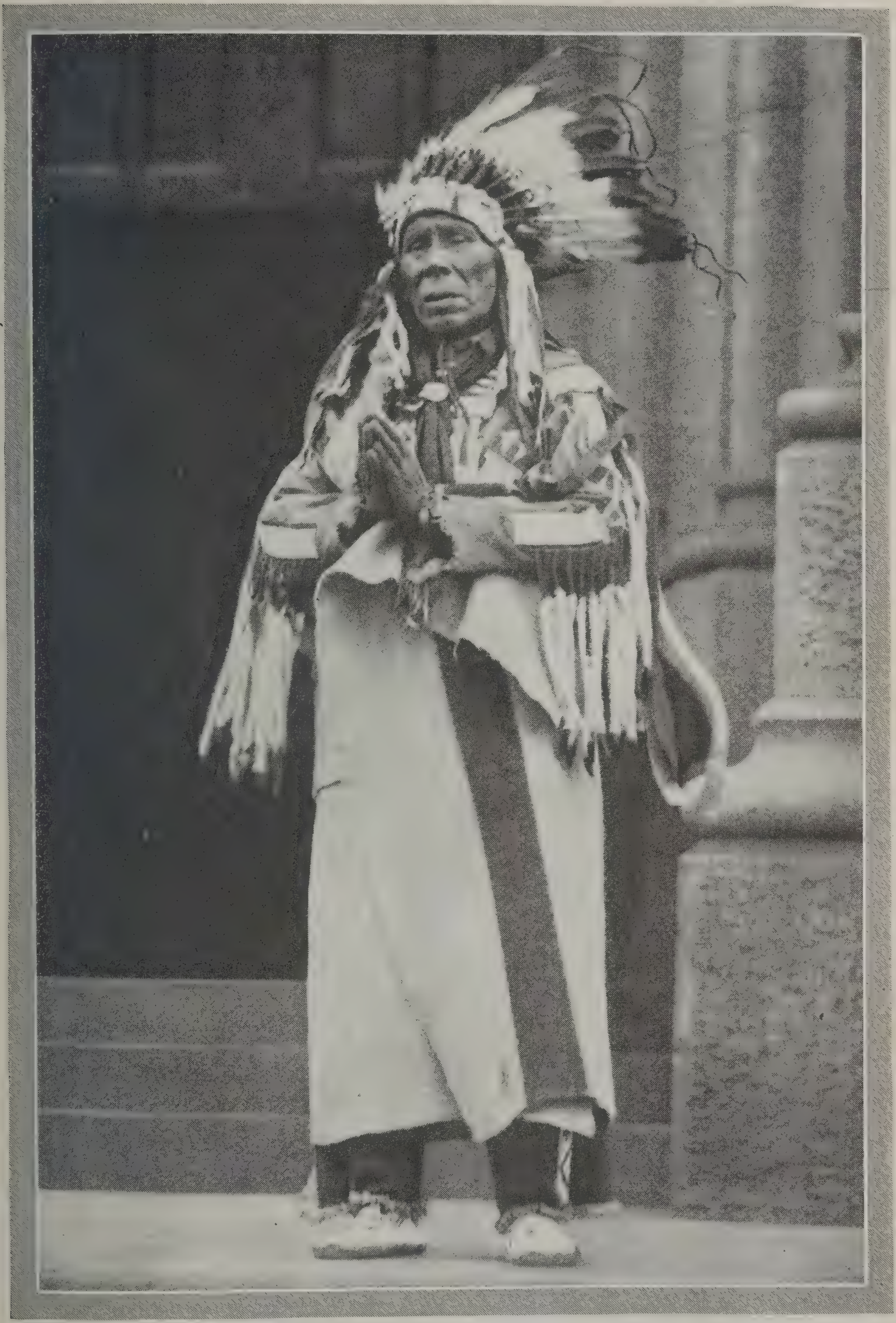
Photograph by Paul Thompson, New York



GRAY LEGGINGS, A TYPICAL COMANCHE LEADER. THE COMANCHES ARE AN OFFSHOOT OF THE SHOSHONI WHO WERE DRIVEN SOUTH BY THE SIOUX TO OCCUPY A TERRITORY EMBRACED IN COLORADO, OKLAHOMA, AND TEXAS

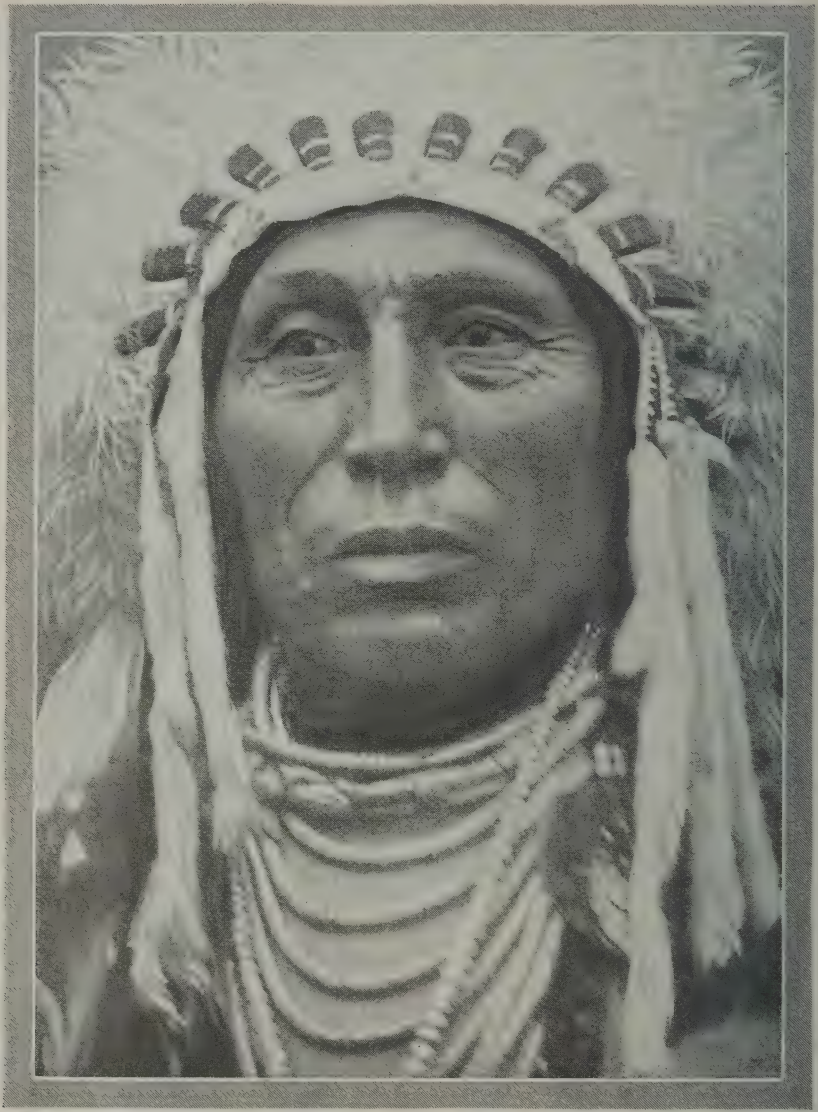
enough to sweep back the tide of white settlement which was drowning his people. His plan was frustrated by the premature action of his brother, Tenskwatawa the Prophet; and thereafter he fought with the British against the Americans in the War of 1812. He was killed in battle at the age of forty-five.

Another Indian of marked ability as a war leader who undertook to gather into a confederation the tribes of the Mississippi Valley was Black Hawk, the Sauk. For five years, in his early manhood, he abstained from intertribal warfare in order to fit himself for spiritual leadership; but when the crisis in the affairs of his people came, he ranged himself among the enemies of the Americans and took the leadership



A STRIKING PICTURE OF A REMARKABLE FACE. BLACK BEAR, A SIOUX CHIEF WHO SURVIVED THE OUTBREAKS OF 1876 AND 1891, PRAYING ON THE STEPS OF ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, WHILE IN NEW YORK TO ATTEND THE DEDICATION OF THE INDIAN STATUE IN THE HARBOR

Photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York



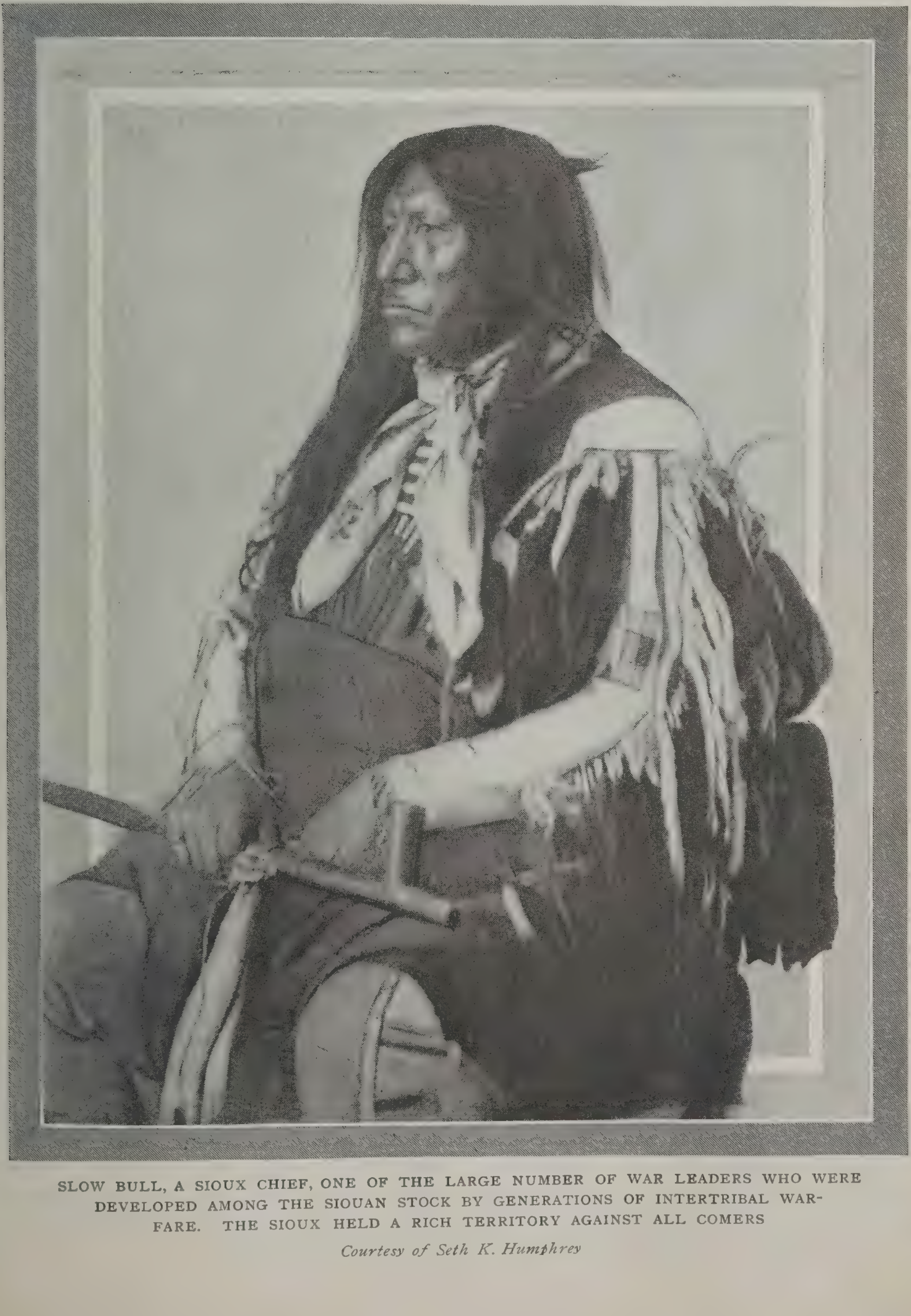
WHITE-MAN-RUNS-HIM—ONE OF THE SURVIVORS OF THE OLD INDIAN TYPE; THIS PICTURE WAS MADE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO NEW YORK WITH THE DELEGATION TO HELP DEDICATE THE HARBOR STATUE TO THE AMERICAN INDIAN

Photograph by Paul Thompson, New York

of his people away from the "friendly" Keokuk (a chief of undoubted power who was of great service to his people after peace was declared).

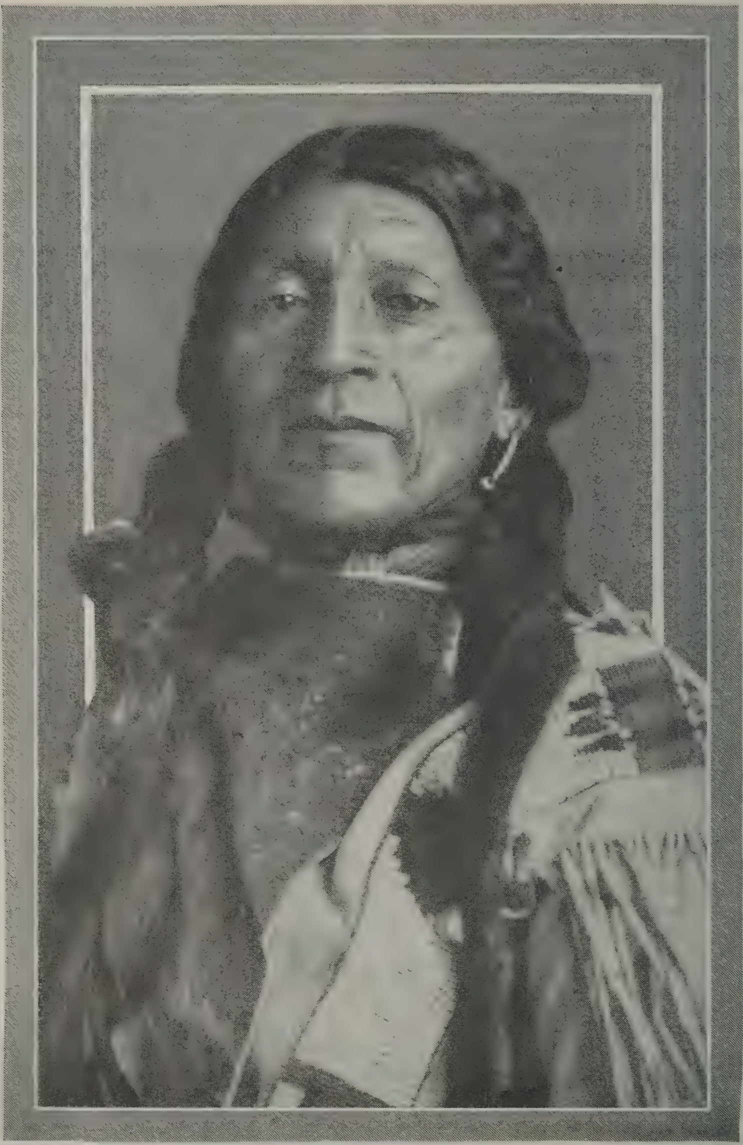
Down the line of great war leaders, as the nineteenth century wore on, the reader of Indian history comes upon that group of Sioux chiefs whose power was not broken until after the Custer massacre of 1876 — Sitting Bull, Spotted Tail, Two Strikes, Little Crow, and the rest. So effectively were the Sioux led in their long warfare with the whites that a saying has grown up in the Indian service that the tribes, like the Sioux, that fought hardest against the government have won better treatment than those who were friendly. "Homeric children" is a term applied to the old Indians by a United States Commissioner of Education. It is a description to captivate the imagination — and more accurate than most. With their sudden, vast angers and their fierce, swift reprisals, the Sioux particularly earned the title of "Homeric children." The mysteries of their medicine lodges, dependent for their effect on the childlike faith of the people, became bound up inextricably with the matter of leadership in the hunt and in warfare.

Last of all the great war leaders came the Apaches Cochise, Mangas Colorado, and Geronimo in the Southwest, and Chief Joseph of the Oregon and Idaho Nez Percés. Cochise, who gave his name to one of the counties of Arizona, made peace in



SLOW BULL, A SIOUX CHIEF, ONE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF WAR LEADERS WHO WERE DEVELOPED AMONG THE SIOUAN STOCK BY GENERATIONS OF INTERTRIBAL WARFARE. THE SIOUX HELD A RICH TERRITORY AGAINST ALL COMERS

Courtesy of Seth K. Humphrey



PEDRO CAJETO, A STRONG MAN OF THE PUEBLO OF SANTA CLARA, IN NEW MEXICO. HE HAS SERVED AS GOVERNOR OF THE PUEBLO, AND HAS BEEN A POWER IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE CONFEDERATION OF PUEBLO INDIANS

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1872—ten years after his associate, Mangas Colorado, was killed. Geronimo carried forward the reckless warfare of the Arizona and New Mexico Apaches until 1886, when he was taken. He died a prisoner of war, though not confined, in 1909.

Worthy to be remembered with the retreat of Xenophon's ten thousand was the retreat led by Chief Joseph in 1877, when with Miles in front, Howard behind, and Sturgis and his Indian scouts on his flank, the Nez Percé chief led his people (a small band, incommoded with women and children) a thousand miles toward the Canadian border. It is from the lips of the men who fought against him that the strongest tributes to his ability as a great leader were paid to Joseph.

With Chief Joseph, who died in 1904, passed the last of the great war leaders of the Indians. When the reservation system was firmly established their occupation was gone. A few professed a mild faith in the white man's civilization, and when they were convinced that it was hopeless to try to turn back the advance of the settlers, they became effective keepers of the peace among their younger and more hot-headed tribesmen. In this employment most of them spent their last years.

Great leaders of peace, real statesmen were not lacking among the old Indians. Among the first to welcome the English colonists as early as 1621 was Massasoit, of whom Drake wrote:

" He was a chief renowned more in peace than war, and was, as long as he lived, a friend to the English, notwithstanding they committed repeated usurpations upon his lands and liberties." In the history of the settlement of Ohio the name of Logan (Tah-gah-jute), a Cayuga or Mingo chief, is written large as a friend of the whites until his family was massacred; and then he turned against the settlers. Rum was the fatal gift of the whites to Logan, as it had been to Tedyusking, the great Delaware chief, diplomat, and friend of the Americans a few years before, and to many another before and since.

Debarred from following the life of a hunter by a crippling accident, a Cherokee named Sequoya (born about 1760) became a trader and silversmith. He came into contact with the whites, was impressed by their ability to make themselves understood by writing, and sat down to work out an alphabet or syllabary for his own language. Twelve years he labored at it, in his intervals of leisure, got a system which satisfied him, then set out to teach his people. They responded eagerly, and in two years (this was in 1824) a part of the Bible was printed in the Cherokee characters Sequoya had elaborated. By 1828 the Cherokees had a weekly newspaper—half of it printed in English and half in the characters which this Indian Cadmus had made familiar to his people. In his later life Sequoya became a man of power and influence in his tribe, and his counsel was potent in the settlement and political organization of Indian Territory.

Sacagawea (Bird-woman), the calm Shoshoni wife who guided Lewis and Clark across the Rockies in 1804, has been honored by the erection of two statues—one in the City Park of Portland, Oregon, and another in the State capitol of North Dakota. A monument at Fort Washakie, Wyoming, marks the grave of another Shoshoni, Chief Washakie, who was the strongest war leader among his people in the intertribal campaigns and the strongest friend of the whites in the years when the other plains Indians were embroiled with the soldiers.

Fit to stand with those old statesmen among the Indians were three whose fame reaches up to our own generation—Red Cloud, the Sioux chief, who fought as hard for peace as any of the others for conquest; Ouray, the Ute leader whom Carl Schurz, while Secretary of the Interior, described as the most intellectual man he had ever met; and Standing Bear, the Ponca chief whose tragic story stirred the country and whose pleas for just treatment led to the famous court decision which established for the first time the Indian's right to be recognized in law as a " person."

These are a few of the names on the long roll of old Indian leaders. The list is closed—or closing.

No generalization is quite true. Here and there among the older Indians you may still find men of real influence in their tribes—like Francisco Naranjo, chief of the General Federation of Pueblo Indians in New Mexico, who has met with courage and intelligence the problems of land tenure, of taxation, and the unlawful traffic in whisky among his people. When Francisco Naranjo dies there will pass from the scene not a hopeless old man degraded by the idleness of the reservation and muttering against the injustices of the whites (a characteristic type) but one who saw clearly and tried sanely to shape the destiny of 4,000 Pueblo Indians.

Four things you must know to be a leader, said the old medicine men (who were not " healers," but moral and spiritual guides for their people). You must know that human life is sacred; you must know how to walk straight in the path of truth; you must know patience and forbearance in action; and you must know deliberation and prudence in speech. Those old ones met that test. They have passed, but their memory is left. To their sucessors they have handed on a wonderful standard of leadership, and to America something distinctive and admirable in type.

THE SPINSTER QUESTION

(DISCUSSION No. 3)

The interest in the spinster question is broadening out into a wide discussion. We are receiving many letters and many articles on the subject. The original paper was published in our January issue under the title "The Plaint of a Spinster," and immediately awakened broad interest. Last month we published a reply entitled "A Defense of Spinsters." We give herewith the views of three other persons, an Englishman and two women, one an American and the other a Canadian.

Most writers sending in letters and articles have read into the plaint of a spinster merely the cry of a human heart for children. This idea was perhaps over-played by the woman who wrote the article—and it was a woman, in spite of all fancies to the contrary—but her thought covered as well the question of companionship, of human interdependence and human mating.

The gist of some of the articles is that it were perfectly feasible to go out and pick up so many children from the street, as one would go out and buy so many bags of meal, thus satisfying the cravings of a woman's heart for motherhood denied. It is significant, in this connection, that no men hold to this view. Bachelor women, on the other hand, think it should be good enough, accompanied by a life devoted to charity, to human uplift, or to some definite pursuit in the world of endeavor, to satisfy the heart and soul of any woman.

Munsey's Magazine doesn't believe any such thing, and doesn't believe any woman of normal temperament and normal ideas ever holds to any such illusion. Unmarried and conscious of accumulating years, the spinster is apt to seek solace and comfort by contrasting her position with that of the matrimonial failures rather than that of the matrimonial successes, thus convincing, or trying to convince herself, that there is no life for woman like that of the bachelor woman.—*The Editor.*

AS AN ENGLISHMAN SEES IT

THE English nation is believed to be the most phlegmatic on earth, and of all its sections and ages the married man of middle class, approaching middle life, is the least likely to be attracted by maudlin, sickly sentiment. Doubtless among the many hundred thousand readers of The Munsey there are a large number who would so write down "The Plaint of a Spinster," in the January issue, but for myself I am bound to confess I have never perused a more heart-rending human document. I have read "The Plaint" through, not once, but half a dozen times; I have tried to pick a quarrel with the writer and to dismiss her as one of the drones in the human hive—who with work ready to hand, looks over it and from sheer ennui is driven into an hysterical introspection, by which means she makes of herself a martyr.

But all to no purpose. Instead, I see and feel the soul-anguish of a woman, beautiful in possessing all the best attributes of womanhood, eminently fitted to have been the wife of some good man, and the mother of sons and daughters of credit to their race, but who finds herself balked of the realization of the highest and holiest aspirations of her sex through no fault of her own. She is one of the large and ever-growing army of women who in matters matrimonial are the victims of circumstance.

I picture her a woman of refined instincts, modest and shrinking instinctively from anything in the nature of notoriety, whose fault, if she has one, has been that she has kept in the background on that account and not given her natural charms full bent at a time when she was of marriageable age — one whose self-revelation far from being immodest or maudlin, is really a sublime act of courage.

It must have cost such a woman infinite pain to lay bare all the unsatisfied longings, all the withered hopes of her sad heart. Not without some great object, some great purpose, could she have placed what she has hitherto most scrupulously concealed—her very soul—on the vivisection table and put on record for all who care to read the results of her daring, searching self-examination.

I find myself asking what that object could be. Certainly, not to excite sympathy for herself personally: that would be too small an end to achieve at such a price. It must have been an object outside self and I take it that her intention was of a two-fold character—the first, to make us men-folk more wise, more discerning, more practical in our choice of a mate, and the second to give articulate expression on behalf of her entire sex to a Great Remonstrance against the insane unwritten law of so-called civilized society which condemns her and her sisters to an absolutely passive rôle in "The Great Adventure."

Bernard Shaw in "Man and Superman" has portrayed woman as the pursuer who marks down her victim and forthwith carries off the stakes matrimonial, but men folk know that such women are not the majority and that even if they were they would make the least desirable of wives. Their vampire instincts would only batten on the marriage service, and the husband in such cases would become a mere chattel in an unhappy domestic *ménage*. But between Bernard Shaw's "pursuer" and the rôle of the normal woman, in the scale of society which he pictures and to which obviously the writer of "The Plaint" belongs, is a great gulf fixed. Women of her class are tied down by convention—a convention, be it noted, created chiefly by their own sex, and with regard to which mothers are the severest task-masters.

Before the first promptings of sex love have fluttered in girlish bosoms they are warned to hold themselves in reserve before men, above all not to show the slightest preference for one young man above another; if affections begin to form in girlish hearts despite maternal warnings, then they must disguise them, hide them, be stand-offish. Why?

"To make the prize worth winning," say mothers.

Do these sage marriage-making mamas, I wonder, ever think what the effect of such aloofness and hauteur must be on the men who are probably best worth winning? The modest, self-respecting, and, for that reason, usually sensitive young man, in nine cases out of ten, takes the attitude at its face value, and the result is that a girl in every way fitted to make him a suitable helpmeet is left either to join the great army of "unwanted," or to be snapped up by some self-assured, self-centered fellow who could never make any girl happy even if he had the capacity and the grit necessary to maintain a home at a comfortable standard.

Society needs to revise its code of etiquette and cast-iron laws which leave a girl tied hand and foot on the path matrimonial, to strike off the miserable fetters of out-of-date convention and give its daughters reasonable freedom and breathing-space so that they may take a hand in the shaping of their own destiny. At best today the self respecting girl — that is the girl who so far conforms to standard convention as to retain such self-respect as is compatible with that standard—has only a freedom of negation and even that is sometimes denied her.

Parental pressure is oft-times brought to bear to make her say "yes" to a proposal of marriage against which all her instincts revolt. In homes where more latitude—of negation—is allowed she may be permitted to say "no" once or twice or even thrice without comment, but if the process is repeated she is reminded that the time is swiftly approaching when she must be regarded as "on the shelf."

Could anything be more cruel than this attitude in the face of a blind convention which bids girls sit with folded hands, waiting for the right man to come along, and in the face of the false pride which leads fathers and mothers to veto any scheme for their daughters working out a career for themselves? To learn a trade, to enter an office would be derogatory. No! they are meant for "something better." In the words of your contributor, they are raised "To know how to keep house, to anticipate using their knowledge in homes of their own, to value the assured position of the married woman."

All this is very right and very wise if parents do not shut their eyes to obvious deduction from the census and the Registrar General's returns—that there is an appreciable surplusage of young women in every grade of society who can never by any possibility marry. If they read those statistics aright two duties rest upon them.

First, not to unduly emphasize the "obvious security" of the married woman (in how large a proportion of cases that security is a myth and a delusion), but, instead to preach to daughters and proclaim to all young men of their acquaintance the gospel of " modest beginnings."

The second duty is to provide their daughters with the means of earning an independent livelihood, which incidentally, as I shall seek to show, gives them the best chance of finding a matrimonial mate.

Here in England, at any rate, the girl who has a vocation of some sort, even if it is only a minor clerkship, has a better time than her sisters who have no definite place in the world's work. She enjoys a larger freedom, she is more natural,—for in the contact of business she learns her own real value and the real value of those she mixes with; she enjoys a larger acquaintance among eligible young men; she can pay her own way to the theater, the picture-house, or the dance. In a word, without seeming to do so, she can pick and choose those of her male acquaintances she cares to cultivate and drop those she doesn't.

It only needs a little thinking about to know that this is true. The matrimonial market open to daughters does not cause maternal anxiety in the working class home. For one reason, the working man's wife usually has far more urgent and pressing problems to occupy her mind every day of the year, but chiefly because experience has taught the mother that the working man's daughter has a way of managing her own love affairs and managing them very well into the bargain.

The mother knows that if Mary or Jane is of the " matrimonial sort "—I use the phrase of the people—sooner or later, unless things go very much awry, she will bring the young man home and matters will be in train for the marriage service. And if Mary or Jane is not of the " matrimonial sort "—well, Kismet; she at least has her trade and can earn her own living, and with a circle of friends, formed as a result of having an occupation, she can live her own life, not altogether drab and cheerless, and be of some service to the community. Not for the English working class girls, at any rate, is " the unscalable wall at whose stony base they must sit and learn to make the best of the worst, with no loophole through which to gaze with hope to a future."

Cannot the great middle class on each side of the Atlantic take a leaf out of the book of the English working-class mother and teach their daughters that marriage is not the be-all and end-all of existence, but at the same time give them something of a real chance to find a mate of their own choosing? To leave matters where they are at present would be the height of folly, and, as " The Plaint of a Spinster " shows, inexpressibly cruel toward those for whom they should have nothing but tender solicitude.

I am no lover of the French system, where marriages are arranged by the parents without regard to the views of the parties chiefly concerned, but I am not at all sure whether, with all its risks of unhappiness and its imperfections in other respects, the French way is not less cruel than our Anglo-American system, which is really no system at all—happy-go-lucky in its conception and profoundly unsatisfactory and oft-times intensely cruel in its working.

Were I a wife instead of a husband I dare say I could tabulate scores of cases of women obviously suited to make good wives and mothers, who, in moments of confidence, had confessed that they " never had a real chance " not even the semblance of a proposal, and who are now living—save the mark! — solitary existences, deprived of all that would have spelt happiness to them.

As it is, man though I am, with a comparatively limited circle of friends I could put my finger on quite a number of dull, drab monotonous existences as " unwanted women " brought about by parental folly which kept daughters at home because of " ladylike appearances " when they would have preferred to go out into the world and mingle with their fellows; some few cases where parental veto has marred and wrecked what would otherwise have been happy lives, and yet others where parental pressure has driven into matrimony, to their own undoing and the spoiling of the careers of their unfortunate husbands, girls with none of the " domesticities."

I do not for a moment contend that all unhappy marriages are the result of parental mismanagament. Marriage is after all very much of a lottery, and many of the " ideal " marriages end in disaster—marriages, that is, which were proclaimed at the time as real love matches but the parties to which all too soon found out that they were not at all suited to each other. In this reflection, I think, may be found some consolation for your contributor—the only consolation, I fear, and a very meager one at that.

Suppose she had married and her matrimonial bark had gone shipwreck? I want to be fair to your spinster. She seems to have anticipated such an hypothesis in her conception of the matron " worn with the actual cares of married life " who might sneer at her grief and even insinuate that some do not know when they are lucky. Your spinster has evidently a very logical mind, for she accepts the supposition and says " since I do not know (that I am lucky) I can find no joy in my unrealized bliss." Even so, but was not old Will Shakespeare right when he wrote:—

> Better to bear the ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of.

That is a much-worn quotation, peculiarly applicable to would-be suicides. But for that very reason I cannot resist the impression that it is peculiarly applicable also to the frame of mind in which Spinster closes her article. Therein she strikes one false note, a note that jars and is out of harmony with the high level of all the rest of the self-revelation of her " unfulfilled " life.

" I wonder," she writes, " if it is not wiser for a girl to see a man merely as a means to an end—the route by which she may go to complete development—and to make up her mind to subjugate delicacy of feeling and refinement to the more important business of securing her entrance into wifehood and motherhood. . . . Great ends involve some sacrifice to attain. Reaping, as I am, the bitter harvest of loneliness and unfulfilment I say that girls should cultivate the ways of appealing to man *which men can understand* " (the italics are hers not mine).

A paragraph such as this I have quoted can be read in different ways. *I* wonder if Spinster has realized that one of them is that which the *doyen* of English novelists made the theme of " Jude the Obscure." Surely not, else a woman of such delicacy of feeling and refinement could never have written it. What follows shows clearly that such a meaning was furthest from her thoughts, and I feel I must apologize for even hinting at the construction which some men—and women—may put upon it.

No! her meaning is simply the Shavian one as set forth in " Man and Superman." If she had her chance over again, I take it she means, she would not hide her light under a bushel. She would display her charms and accomplishments, domestic as well as artistic; she would mark down her mate and by means of the innocent guiles and artifices of her sex figuratively " slay " him. Would she in that event be happy, or would she, in the matrimonial sense, be committing suicide?

I wonder!

ANOTHER SPINSTER'S SAY

THERE are always two sides—sometimes three—to a story, and it is the other side to that wailful cry, " The Plaint of a Spinster " in January MUNSEY'S, that I wish to present.

I shall not deny the truth of her argument that the normal woman is happier in filling the place Nature planned for her than in facing life in single blessedness, however useful that life may be; and I frankly admit that no woman wants to be an old maid. But—ah, yes, there are several " buts."

I deny first that a woman's life is necessarily spoiled because she is not a wife and mother. There are too many avenues open to women for real usefulness in the world for any one of us to " sit and grieve and wonder," even though all kindred are gone to the last third cousin. In my opinion the author of the article referred to would be much happier herself, and the cause of more happiness to others, if she were obliged to get out and rustle for her living; there is nothing like work for scattering the worry devils and keeping us in sympathetic touch with humanity.

Secondly, I deny the apparent inference to be drawn from her story, that so many of the single 9,000,000 are on the waiting list because Barkis wasn't willin', or that those who might have won a place in Hymen's ranks by taking an inferior article would better have done so than face old maidism. Speak for yourself, sister; but as one of the other 8,999,999 I protest.

As I look upon the matrimonial wreckage all about us, visible and invisible, " I thank the gods that be " for the courage to face a lonely, heart starved life rather than marry the wrong man; for I do not admit that a woman's ideals can be so easily shelved either for the good of the race or her own happiness.

A clever writer and lecturer—a man, by the way — writing on the subject of old maids began his article with, " The only difference between the married woman and her single sister is, that the former accepted her first offer and the latter did not." Personal experience and observation compel me to agree with his statement.

Now you, dear married madam who may chance to read this, we know to be an exception; you did not take your first offer, nor your second or third; you were one of those fortunate charmers who bore a train of suitors in your wake, and therefore you are in a class by yourself;—but I am safe in repeating that the majority of married women did accept their first offer and the majority of single women did not, and there you have the situation of the 9,000,000 " unappropriated blessings " in a thimble.

The writer of the " Plaint " seems to deplore her lack of the power of attraction—she is not beautiful, nor the possessor of any of those feminine arts which lands the fish within the angler's net. It is hard to believe that one so competent can be so lacking in charm—that word which means so much and is so indefinable—and I think she has been unduly modest in self-appraisement. But, assuming that she is correct,—dear fellow spinster, let me whisper the secret—it is so very simple.

The next time John sits beside you on that old-fashioned sofa start him gently on his way toward a personal history; let him relate all he has done, all he expects to do; let him absorb your interest to the extent that he infers you believe him to be the only desirable male being God ever made,—that in fact, he is IT in capital letters.

He may be, and probably is, just plain man and it will be a strain upon your intelligence to believe otherwise; but let that remain in the background and let what he *likes* you to believe, smile from your lips and shine from your eyes in soulful radiance. (I am assuming now, that you wish " to cultivate the ways of appealing to men *which men can understand,*" and that any decent man will do.) He will leave you thinking " That's a mighty fine little woman; and *clever,* too."

Probably the next time he calls he is yours to take or leave; the trick is done. Believe me it can be done at any age, at any time and in any clime where man doth exist; but a word of warning, sister dear: Don't, as you value your future happiness take him, unless you can always make him believe through all the years to come, he is, for you, the only man of his race. Aye, there's the rub.

My fellow spinster also deplores the fact that men are so generally attracted to the girl of physical charm, though incompetent and frivolous, and ignore her sister of plainer beauty, but of superior mind and ability. This has been commented upon since Adam's day therefore we may as well accept the fact that a man will fall in love thrice with a colorful bit of " a rag, and a bone, and a hank of hair," where he is attracted to her more capable sister once.

On this head we have so eminent an authority as Herbert Spencer who says Nature made the heart of man so, therefore it would seem there is nothing for us to do but accept Nature's dictum—and aim to look the part.

There is one point made in " The Plaint of a Spinster " with which I agree and which I earnestly emphasize. It is the lack of wisdom shown by those parents who rear their daughters in the belief that a woman's only aim in life is to marry and bear children. That it is the chief aim may be conceded, but on the principle that it is not good policy to put all your eggs into one basket, it is advisable for their possible future peace of mind, that those daughters be prepared for one or more of the various lines of useful work in which single women can, and do, make good.

It has been stated that the world contains more men than women; but the sexes are unevenly apportioned, hence the lack of men in some localities and the lack of women in others. Under such conditions, it would seem to be folly, in those Adamless parts of our country, (chiefly found in rural districts) to teach young girls to sit, like patient *Griseldas,* waiting for the prince who never comes. Nay, all hail to the newer spirit of independence now taught our girls that to have an object and mission in life other than matrimony is not only wise, but vitally necessary. I protest against the all too often exploited theory that a single woman is either an object of pitying contempt or a "misfit," as one woman writer has called her. If I were to voice my conclusions based upon personally known object lessons in spinsterdom, I would unhesitatingly affirm that the good Lord permits many old maids to exist as a shield and support for the incompetent male members of their families. Any female can add to the population, but it takes a woman of ability to act the part of a father or a brother.

"It is a tragic thing to abandon hope" says my fellow sister in single misery.

Truly it is; but the beautiful thing is, it isn't necessary. While there's life there's hope—for wifehood, at least. Think of the many men who get the marrying habit and who so gallantly come to our rescue twice, thrice, even five times. Not long ago I read of a newly wedded couple, the groom eighty years young, the bride seventy-five, and her *first* marriage.

But in all seriousness, fellow spinster, I will admit the heartache, and the effort to hide it. But, oh my dear, do you know what I should do if I had your silent, lonely house and the means to live in it? While there are so many motherless children waiting to be homed and loved, I'd not let my empty arms remain unfilled another day, but adopt one or more of those homeless waifs and help them to become useful, honored men and women. Believe me, next to creating life there is no nobler task than preserving it.

A BACHELOR WOMAN'S SAY

BY LILLIAN MAY WILSON

WE are so irrepressibly progressive in these days that a glance backward is apt to show us strange things. At least that is what I found when I read in the January MUNSEY the "Plaint of a Spinster," purported to have been written by one of them. As a cry from the past, it was well enough; but when the writer projected her plaint into the present and declared it to be the universal chorus of the 9,000,000 unmarried women in America, it became grotesque.

In the first place, if the Spinster took this appalling number from the census reports, she has overlooked the fact that it includes all unmarried women of eighteen years of age and upwards. Therefore, a large proportion of them are on the high road to matrimony, and since her article was written, several thousand of them have entered that state. There still remains, however, and perhaps always will remain, a large number who have no such expectations; but the attitude of the Spinster and that of these bachelor women are about as similar as would be the activities of a fifteenth century begging friar and those of a modern trust buster.

Instead of expressing their views, she has pretty clearly revealed the differences between them and herself; and the chief of these differences is the dominant strain in her "Plaint"—she has nothing to do. She lives in a town of about 20,000, yet it furnishes no outlet for her energies.

"Perhaps in a city," she writes, "there are ways for an old maid to be useful and happy. Perhaps there are more men there than in our town, so that she may hope for companionship before the journey ends. But here I have nothing to do because there are already more people than are needed for the work there is to do."

In the past fifteen years I have been more or less closely in touch with life in a number of towns in different localities, some of them considerably less than 20,000 souls. In each of them I found several women of the non-expectant class, but they are not sitting down by the wailing wall. On the contrary, they are about the busiest people in the town.

Some of them are teachers; and teaching in this day requires fully as large an ingredient of broad, active philanthropy as it does of pedagogy. Neither eight hours nor ten hours per day are sufficient for all these teachers find to do. A large number of others are business women, doing all sorts of interesting things once thought impossible for women, and then stretching their leisure hours to the utmost to make them include study clubs and social service work that is always begging for their assistance. There are others who are not compelled to work for a salary, but I have never heard of one of them being reduced to the abject necessity of cleaning the garret in order to pass away the time.

One of these women, shocked by the frightful child mortality rate in the families of the laborers in the factory and smelter of her home town, took a thorough course of training as a nurse and made a careful study of the district nursing system. Then she came home and began her battle for the lives of those little ones, and she is winning it too.

Another one realized the need of a public library in the little town where she lived. She and the idea gripped each other so hard that they never parted company until she saw the infant library come into being, and she has faithfully rocked its cradle ever since. Not content with this achievement, she is turning her attention to the rural districts, and is a most busy promoter of a public library with which she hopes to reach every district school in her county; and when that is done she has still other visions. Not long ago, two of her friends were discussing the desirable length of life, when she broke in with, " I want to live to be ninety—I've got to; I can't finish all the things I have to do in any less time."

Another bachelor woman's energies were aroused by learning of the bad sanitary condition in the poor quarter of her town—it was a town of scarcely more than 20,000 too — and she set about cleaning it up. She is not spectacular in her methods, but she is persistent. She does not fight the city officials, or the voters who are a little hard to convert; she is just a good fellow among them and makes them believe they are the same. They respect her womanliness, her judgment and her good sense, and one by one she is getting the reforms she is working for.

Still another woman, with college training, was impressed by the lack of wholesome amusement for the young girls in her town and their consequent recourse to the street, the railroad station and the moving picture show. So she organized amusement clubs and is developing so much musical and dramatic talent in her protégées that her town is about to witness the unusual spectacle of maternal pride justified by its objects.

These are a few of the things that bachelor women by the scores are doing. These women are not exceptional cases, as the Spinster intimates, but are of the " rank and file " of bachelor women as I know them. The exceptions are those who, like herself, are " festering in the poison of their own uselessness." Nor have these women taken up their occupations as " tragic efforts to fill the aching voids within." Their faces, the tones of their voices, and the very atmosphere which surrounds them contradict such an assumption.

Neither have they been ambitious for careers. Excepting for the special training they took when the need appealed to them, their education was the same as that of their friends who married. They were simply born to be women, not necessarily wives and mothers; they developed into womanhood, they found work that needed a woman's hand and they are doing it.

Moreover, because of their mental alertness, and the freshness of their ideas and conversation, these women have a very definite social value, the lack of which was one of the Spinster's bitterest complaints. They are not asked to stay in the pantry and see that the refreshments are properly served—not they. On the contrary, they are usually in demand at social functions, and particularly so if there happen to be out of town visitors or guests whom the woman's club or other local societies delight to honor.

In her complaint against her own lot, the Spinster has taken the one-sided and exaggerated view of a person who sees value in but one condition in life. Her observations, which she admits have been limited, have apparently led her to the conclusion that her acquaintances who married, whether fit or unfit, have reached a height of happiness to be measured only by her depth of misery; that if she had married some one — *somehow* — she, too, would have been happy. Then she naively assumes that this is precisely the view of 9,000,000 other women. I wonder if she ever summarized the actual results of her observations.

My own girlhood was spent in a small town and I have just made a list of the names of the girls whom I knew intimately, and regarding whose present condition I am fairly well informed. There are twenty of them, and the statistics are as follows:

Divorced	8
Deserted by husband	1
Compelled by necessity to take positions as teachers	2
Died in early years of married life—(2 during first year)	3
Living the ordinary commonplace lives of village matrons	6

A contemplation of the above absolutely truthful tabulation of facts is hardly calculated to bring on violent convulsions of envy in the breast of the self-supporting bachelor woman who is the twenty-first member of the group. Modesty and prudential considerations (since she sometimes visits in her old home town) prevent her from saying that all these girls were of the unfit sort whose success in husband-getting the Spinster envies.

As a matter of fact, some of them were of that kind, but others were sweet, womanly girls; and the honors and inconveniences tabulated above were about equally divided between the two classes. I admit that these statistics do not represent my entire observations of married life; nor are they perhaps wholly typical; but they are sufficiently representative of conditions generally to justify the degree of complacency with which mature women of the present day accept their bachelorhood.

The Spinster is not the only person who has spoken for or against the single woman. Certain special articles appearing from time to time, have dealt ungently with her. It is possible that the complacency to which I have just alluded has provoked these criticisms. At any rate, they mark another difference between the old maid and the bachelor woman.

The old maid was sneered at because, according to her critics, she couldn't get married; the bachelor woman has been censured by some current writers because she won't marry. She is reproached by these worthies for taking an economic position that, in the proper order of things, belongs to a man; she is told that her present activities are unfitting her for wifehood and motherhood; then the sociological fervor bubbles up, and she is accused of shirking her sacred responsibilities as a woman and thus endangering the future of the race. Sometimes she is appealed to on more selfish grounds. She is informed that she is lonely, even if she doesn't know it, and that she is doomed to be still lonelier if she persists in her unnatural course.

Well, I suppose we are lonely sometimes; I know I am lonely very often for a sympathetic presence or the touch of a sympathetic hand, though I do not know that it is necessarily a masculine hand. I was lonely in just that way a few months ago as I stood silent before one of the world's great works of art. Presently the silence was broken by the voice of one of two well dressed, prosperous looking men near by:

"I've seen enough o' this junk, how about you?"

"Here too; let's get out o' here; I guess the movies are about our fit," came the reply.

I wasn't lonely for the companionship of either of those men. I can imagine few greater tragedies than a lifetime of it. My gorge rises at the thought.

I was lonely again, terribly lonely, a few evenings later as I stood and watched the sun go down behind the mountains. The shadows were gathering thick in the valley and creeping up the mountainsides where the pines and spruce showed black in the twilight; and above the bare peaks the sky quivered and tingled with its wonderful changing color. Then a youthful voice spoke:

"Sunsets are all right for sentimental guys, but half an hour in this spooky place does me."

And a girl's tones responded: "I should worry?"

"Let's go to the casino to-night," the young man proposed; and they went.

Now the Spinster's conclusion, reduced to its lowest terms, is that she and other unmarried women have made a mess of life by not getting in the "I should worry" class, and preferring casinos to sunsets and movies to masterpieces. She asserts that coarse women invariably marry, and then insists that "girls should cultivate the ways of appealing to men that men can understand," in order that as women they may not be "robbed of the chance to live fully." Forsooth!

Confronted by such a precept, I am moved to record my protest against the trite assumption that maternity is necessary to the full development of a woman's character, and that motherhood, in itself is necessarily and invariably ennobling. That it is potentially so, I admit; but the most valiant defender of the thesis would hardly undertake to prove retarded development in such characters as Jane Addams and Clara Barton. And he would be somewhat embarrassed in sustaining his "ennobling" clause in the face of the spectacle I witnessed not long ago of two little, hungry children wandering about the corridors of an eminently respectable apartment house, until the neighbors discovered that the mother had, the night before, deserted these babies and their father because of her infatuation for another man.

Contrary to the accusations of her critics, the bachelor woman is not opposed to domestic life. Like all normal, healthy human beings, she has a natural desire for companionship (not mere mating) with one of the opposite sex. Economically she is independent of a man. She does not need him as a beast of burden, nor need she be one for him. She does not need him any more than he needs her.

That there is a mutual need, no one, perhaps, will deny; and for the proverbial "right man" she is as willing as other women to assume her share of domestic responsibilities, and, thanks to her broadened life, she is equipped for doing so. She is almost invariably a lover of little children, and has all of a woman's longing for children of her own; but only on condition that they are children of a father who is her intellectual and spiritual, as well as her physical complement—not children bought with the price of her refinement and womanhood.

I do not believe, however, that the Spinster is right when she implies that men as a rule prefer coarse women; and I am absolutely certain that not all men, nor nearly all of them, are like the three examples I have mentioned. I know there are hosts of men fitted to be companions in the fullest sense to women of refinement. Why such men and such women do not always marry, I do not know; nor do I know why there are so many unmarried women (and men too) any more than I know why divorces are so common at the present time or the styles of dress so grotesque. I may have opinions but no knowledge. All I know is that a large celibate class is one of the features of our present social condition. Perhaps it is an unhealthy condition, but certain it is that the Spinster's remedy would only complicate the disease.

Meanwhile, the times are dealing kindly with the bachelor woman. She is content, if not satisfied. Whether as wage earner or otherwise, her hands are full of work that is worth while; much of it would be left undone if she did not do it, and she has neither time nor inclination to formulate "Plaints."

Since this spinster question has taken on so vital an interest, MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE invites a discussion of the subject on broader lines than those of the mere stocking up of a household with ready-made children. It wants to see the heart side, the human side, the companionship side, and the mating side considered as well.

The statistics on divorce and married life presented by the Bachelor Woman are interesting, but not convincing. They do not spell the same thing to MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE that they do to Miss Wilson. We deny that "they are sufficiently representative of conditions generally to justify the degree of complacency with which mature women of the present day accept their bachelorhood." Our observation convinces us that the percentage of mature women who accept their bachelorhood with complacency, with actual heart complacency, is infinitesimally small.

From a group of twenty girls Miss Wilson tells us that only six attained to the enviable standard of "living the ordinary, commonplace life of village matrons." This doesn't sound very exciting, but in contrast with what happened to the other fourteen these six landed high up on the slope of human happiness. What a tragic record: eight divorces, one desertion, two reduced to the necessity of earning their own living, and three deaths, two of these in the very first year of marriage!

If this table were representative of American married life the whole nation would instantly rise up and demand a revision of social usages and marital laws, but fortunately it is not representative. No system is perfect. Marriage as we know it, and as it has come down to us from the centuries, is the best scheme man and woman have yet devised for working out the problem of life. There may be a better system in store for us, but it hasn't yet hove in sight. MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE is not here putting itself on record as in favor of or against divorce. That is another question. The theme now under consideration has to do with spinsters, and the discussion must rest mainly with our readers.

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, however, doesn't mind saying that no normal woman with a full measure of human impulses refuses marriage from choice. There are a thousand valid reasons, very valid reasons, why many women do not marry, but with conditions to their liking, the right man and the right circumstances, marriage would so nearly claim every woman that the number of spinsters or bachelor women would be wholly negligible.—*The Editor.*

PLUMBING AND THE MODERN NOVEL

BY FRANK M. O'BRIEN

ILLUSTRATED BY THELMA CUDLIPP

THE most mysterious professions in the world—outside of alchemy and politics—are literature and plumbing. Literature is mysterious because few understand why it is done and plumbing is mysterious because only the elect know how it is done.

Literature has this advantage over plumbing: that it occasionally leads to glory. There is no Nobel prize for a non-freezing hydrant. Plumbing has this advantage over literature: that you can't get along without it. Nobody, on being informed that a frozen pipe had split under eighty pounds' pressure, ever yawned and remarked that he would look it over some night when he had nothing to do. Literature never hears the wild human call that plumbing hears.

A man who goes into his library and finds the table bare does not ring up Louis J. Vance's hotel and tell him to hurry down with a novel. But when the man goes into his kitchen and finds the hot water boiler giving an impersonation of a demented shower-bath he does not wander away to play billiards. He winds himself around the telephone and S O Ses to the plumber.

Plumbing can get along without literature, but literature cannot get along without plumbing. True, it used to, but that day is past. Poets ignore plumbing, but that is because poetry, like Brooklyn baseball, is in its infancy. Writers of tragic drama ignore plumbing only because the absence of plumbing makes their tragedy more stark. A course of cold baths probably would have cured *Ophelia* — and spoiled the greatest of tragedies.

But the live writings of the day—the novels—do not ignore plumbing, or when their authors fail in their bounden duty, the result is a fiasco.

Not always does plumbing stalk through the pages of the novel with its pack slung over its shoulder. Sometimes

A COURSE OF COLD SHOWER-BATHS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE CURED OPHELIA plumbing is inferred. Writers of novels that deal with Fifth Avenue and Newport do not pipe their pages. But in their works plumbing is none the less present because it is inferred.

You know without being told, when *Cortlandt Van Bink* strides down the avenue, bowing hither and thither with the only silk hat in all daylight New York, that he has just come from his tub. Robert W. Chambers, for instance, makes you feel that every one of his city heroines is on good terms with the porcelain. But he knows where plumbing belongs and when it must have a substitute if it cannot be there itself.

His lovely girl in "Special Messenger" lived in the time of the Civil War, when the plumber's wagon did not follow the flag. So every night, at the end of the exciting chapter, he found for her a cool, deep pool completely surrounded by a thicket; and she had everything else in her saddlebags except a glass towel rail, and that, of course can be dispensed with in time of war.

Less fortunate in his climate, but bolder in execution, was Emerson Hough in "54-40 or Fight." Mr. Hough was obliged to move his dashing heroine, the *Baroness von Ritz,* from Washington to Montreal in the dead of winter. There the hero found her in a residence in the old French quarter to which she had moved all the furniture that had graced her Washington abode.

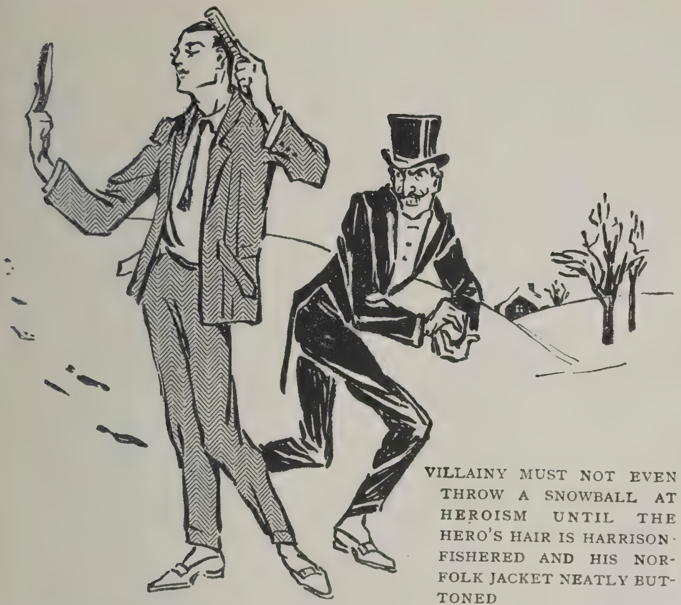
According to this same hero, who tells the story, the *Baroness* brought bath-tubs—yes, plural—with her. From his room he overhears, and reports:

> "No, I think the pink one," I heard her say, "and please—the bath, Threlka, just a trifle more warm." I heard the rattling of toilet articles, certain sighs of content, faint splashings beyond.

He had the other tub—at the other end of the house.

Mr. Hough may deceive the ordinary reader of best sellers, but not the student of Plumbing's Relation to Literature. He leaves the reader to infer that the *Baroness* had carted two bath-tubs up the Hudson River and by way of lakes and mountain passes to Montreal. Your red Indian of

NO INDIAN, IN FICTION OR OUT, COULD EVER BE INDUCED TO CARRY A BATH-TUB



VILLAINY MUST NOT EVEN THROW A SNOWBALL AT HEROISM UNTIL THE HERO'S HAIR IS HARRISON-FISHERED AND HIS NORFOLK JACKET NEATLY BUTTONED

the Roaring Forties was a strong, brave fellow. We are willing to believe that he packed rugs, pictures, bric-à-brac, sofas, chairs and mahogany bedsteads over the hills to Montreal. Yea, we will admit, for the sake of no argument, that a brawny redskin carried the *Baroness's* piano blithely through several hundred miles of howling storm on his patient shoulders. An Indian might carry a piano, which had charms to soothe his savage breast; but no Indian, in fiction or out, could ever be induced to carry a bath-tub.

An equally pitiful attempt to pander to the school of modern plumbing—or indoor bathing, if you choose to have it so—was made by Conan Doyle in "Sir Nigel." After piecing together a fine set of adventures for this gallant knight it dawned upon Sir Conan that *Sir Nigel,* though an Englishman, did not seem to have the tubbing habit. So Doyle lugged a bath-tub into the Middle Ages and set it down in the middle of *Sir Nigel's* room. He didn't dare have pipes of hot and cold water, with glistening faucets and all that. Nor did he dare make the tub of enameled iron. He just stuck *Sir Nigel* in a wooden hogshead of hot water and let other knights trot in to inquire what was up.

Mr. Maurice Hewlett, who is up on knights and their ways better than Sir Arthur knows them, never comes such a foolish bobble. Mr. Hewlett knows that no knight ever took a bath. A crusader would rather encounter a thousand savage Saracens than a bath-tub. Whenever in his judgment, one of his knights needed immersion, Mr. Hewlett had him knocked on the head and he fell from the battlements, or the parapets, or what you please, into a moat full of nice clean water, floated around in full armor for an hour or two and then, tying his lady's scarf around his fractured skull, returned to the plot, clean and refreshed.

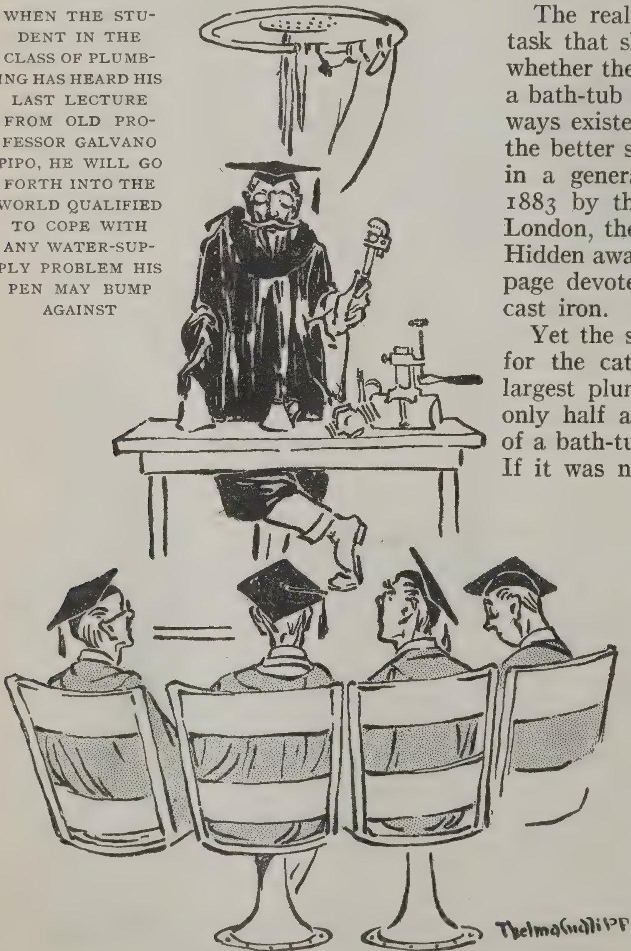
Yet you must excuse the faults of Sir Conan Doyle and others to whom the

HE JUST STUCK SIR NIGEL IN A WOODEN HOGSHEAD OF HOT WATER AND LET OTHER KNIGHTS TROT IN TO INQUIRE WHAT WAS UP

Stillson wrench is newer than the gleaming sword. They have been trying their best to make our novels hygienic, and it is only because they were not properly apprenticed in their youth that they fall down occasionally.

Truth to tell, the number of authors who have studied plumbing intimately may be almost counted on the thumbs of one hand. Arnold Bennett, who digs into the farthest, dustiest corner of almost every other household thing, shies away from plumbing. Yet, if realism is what its worshipers think it is, why is not plumbing to the fore in every page? It is because the novelists shirk their duty.

They will tell you, in weary, infinite detail, how a tablecloth is scraped, folded and put away on the third shelf of the dining-room closet, slightly to the left of the package containing the summer curtains. But when they tell you that the room became chill and the heroine threw on her Indian shawl, using her right arm more vigorously than her left during the operation, do they tell you why the room became chill? Do they explain that the hero, running too much water into the boiler, left little space for the generation of steam? No. And that later he would have to draw off some of the surplus water in a bucket and then watch the steam-gage until it reached a pound and a half? Never. They would like to, for it would wad the story out beautifully, but they are uneducated. Any one can describe a new human emotion and get away with it, but how many novelists can give a lucid explanation of the water-hammer that causes the noise in steam pipes? How many know that boiling water, abandoned to its fate in zero weather, will freeze faster than cold water—and why?

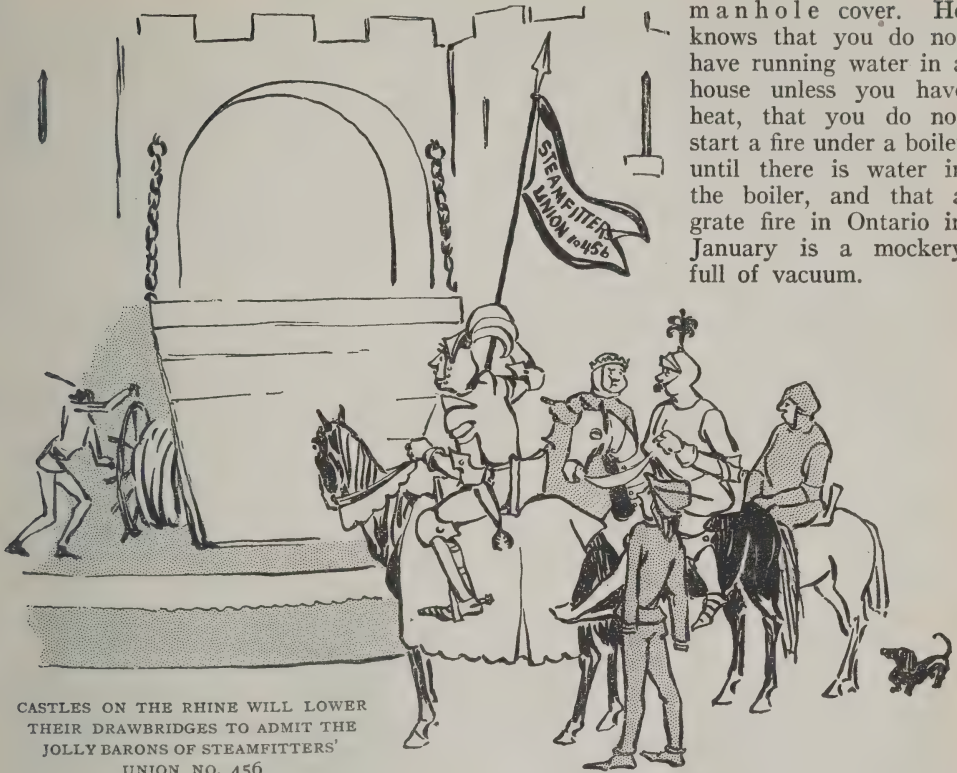


WHEN THE STUDENT IN THE CLASS OF PLUMBING HAS HEARD HIS LAST LECTURE FROM OLD PROFESSOR GALVANO PIPO, HE WILL GO FORTH INTO THE WORLD QUALIFIED TO COPE WITH ANY WATER-SUPPLY PROBLEM HIS PEN MAY BUMP AGAINST

The realists have reeled back from the task that should be theirs. They assume, whether they are English or American, that a bath-tub is a bath-tub and that it has always existed for the use of characters " of the better sort." Little do they know that in a general catalogue, issued as late as 1883 by the largest plumbing firm in all London, the word " tub " does not appear. Hidden away in the back of the book is one page devoted to " baths "—rude things of cast iron.

Yet the situation in America was worse, for the catalogue issued in 1888 by the largest plumbing house in New York had only half a page of bath-tubs—or rather, of a bath-tub, for there was only one of it. If it was not labeled bath-tub one would have considered it a rather ornate coffin for a $57 funeral. It had all the walnut curlicues that could be thought of in the Chester A. Arthur period.

Those who bought one of these splendid pieces of furniture had only to take it home and have it lined with tin or copper and then arrange some method of filling it with water and emptying it again. And yet the novelists gloss over plumbing, which has advanced more in twenty years than they have in a hundred. They speak



CASTLES ON THE RHINE WILL LOWER THEIR DRAWBRIDGES TO ADMIT THE JOLLY BARONS OF STEAMFITTERS' UNION NO. 456

of it lightly, in a passing way, if they speak of it at all. They would have the reader think that they had known the solid porcelain all their lives and that the memory of a wash-tub in the center of the kitchen floor on a Saturday night was not their memory at all, but a vulgar dream.

Only one of the novelists has mastered the intricate details of plumbing, and this one, strangely enough is not a realist, but an idealist. Yet he handles plumbing in a master-plumberly manner. This novelist is Arthur Stringer.

Mr. Stringer, on one recent occasion, brought a hero to an unoccupied farmhouse on the north shore of Lake Ontario in January. *B-r-r-r-r-r!* Then the character decided to stay in the house for a couple of weeks. Your ordinary author would have had the hero light up the furnace or put a roaring fire in the grate. Not so Stringer. He has delved into plumbing. He has followed the spoor of the ¾ inch galvanized. He has gazed upon the expansion tank brooding in its attic nest. He has learned that a water-front in anger is more fatal than the much advertised manhole cover. He knows that you do not have running water in a house unless you have heat, that you do not start a fire under a boiler until there is water in the boiler, and that a grate fire in Ontario in January is a mockery full of vacuum.

A craven novelist would have faltered, but Stringer faced the music. He learned the pipes of plumbing as well as he had learned the pipes of Pan. Using his hero as a medium, he screwed the plugs back into the drain end of the water-pipes, opened the valves leading to the furnace boiler, blew the air out of the steam-pipes, oiled and connected the windmill and did the million and one things that one has to do in opening up a country house. When he got through, the reader knew that the hero might be shot to death in the next chapter, but he would not be blown to slivers by a miffed boiler or drowned by his bedroom radiator.

As novelists come to see, with real eyes, the worlds of which they write, plumbing must loom up as more and more important.

If you read " Graustark " or " Beverley Thereof " you undoubtedly took it for granted that the heroes and heroines therein were slaves of the hot and cold, shower, shampoo and plunge. George Barr McCutcheon did not pipe the pages, but let the plumbing be inferred. Years after he wrote those nice, clean books, full of tacit hygiene, Mr. McCutcheon visited Graustark—or the place where Graustark would be if it were anywhere.

"Will you write another Graustark novel?" he was asked as he hopped off the ship on his return to New York.

"No," he said, and his tone was that of a man who had just lost $100,000. "I have seen the Balkans and I can never again write sympathetically of any one living in or near that part of the world. Nobody in the Balkans, be he prince, potentate or peasant, ever took a bath in his life."

And there you have the weakness of an author who permits the plumbing of his best works to be inferred, instead of making it practical.

The trend of modern thought has compelled many authors to establish a set of unwritten rules for sanitary romance. For instance, when a hero slinks away from his newly-plumbed residence, which he is abandoning to the convenience of *Miss Shirley Shillyshally* and her *Aunt Prudence,* is he himself to go unwashed? No, indeed! It is up to the novelist to discover, in the wild region on the other side of the mountain, a wonderful secret waterfall which, due to its volcanic origin, has hot and cold showers, not to mention a natural soap-dish worn in the very rock. Here the hero tubs at his leisure, even after the arrival on Mount Zingo of *Martin Maledict,* the villain, for it is the law of the novel, hitherto unwritten, that no villain shall open fire on any hero while the hero is stripped to the buff. Neither must the villain steal the hero's clothes or tie knots in his socks. It is perfectly proper for Villainy to drop bichlorid of mercury in Heroism's winecup, but Villainy must not even throw a snowball at Heroism until the hero's hair is Harrisonfishered and his Norfolk jacket neatly buttoned.

As for a villain's bath, let him wait. Only a few chapters, and the dark waters of the fiord will close over him forever.

It may be, in the course of the novel, that *Martin Maledict* persuades *Shirley* and her chaperon to fly with him on his yacht, which has been anchored in the offing. The hero has such a long swim in catching up to them that you feel he is qualified to do without a bath for a couple of days. At the end of this period the novelist puts a knife between his (*Henry Heartache's*) teeth and he goes overboard to kill a shark which is about to eat *Shirley's* lace fan. The pursuit of a treacherous Kanaka is another fine excuse for bathing a hero.

Some day there will be a College of Novelism with a white-enameled Chair of Plumbing in it and after that our best sellers will have something of a general heart interest for the housewife and the commuter. Why should not the struggles of a man digging through four feet of frozen earth to get at a glaciated water-pipe be as thrillingly described as the antics of a man delving for mere gold? Rex Beach may answer if he can.

And when the student in the class of plumbing has heard his last lecture from old Professor Galvano Pipo, he will go forth into the world qualified to cope with any water-supply problem that his pen may bump against. Deftly will his hero carry the kit of plumbers' tools into the jungles of the Amazon and the mountains of Mars. Arctic explorers will lay water mains farther north than runs the law of man or city meter. The deserts will have pools and the pools will have spring-boards, even in the mirages. Castles on the Rhine will lower their drawbridges to admit the jolly barons of Steamfitters' Union No. 456.

Even send a hero to Siberia, and the Czar, in a moment of temporary aberration (Note to Russian censor: This is a fashionable American disease) will have the fine fellow assigned to the Russian bath department of the salt mines.

And as for the reviewers, who sit at the end of every novelist's vista, they will not gage a novel by the clearness of its style, but by the brightness of the taps and the general workmanship of the hot-water system.

MAGIC

I THOUGHT that life was an old tread-mill,
And I brooded away with my eyes on the ground;
Love gave me his lips—I drank my fill—
And the whole of the world was a merry-go-round!

Jane Burr

THE MEN WHO PUT GREECE BACK ON THE MAP

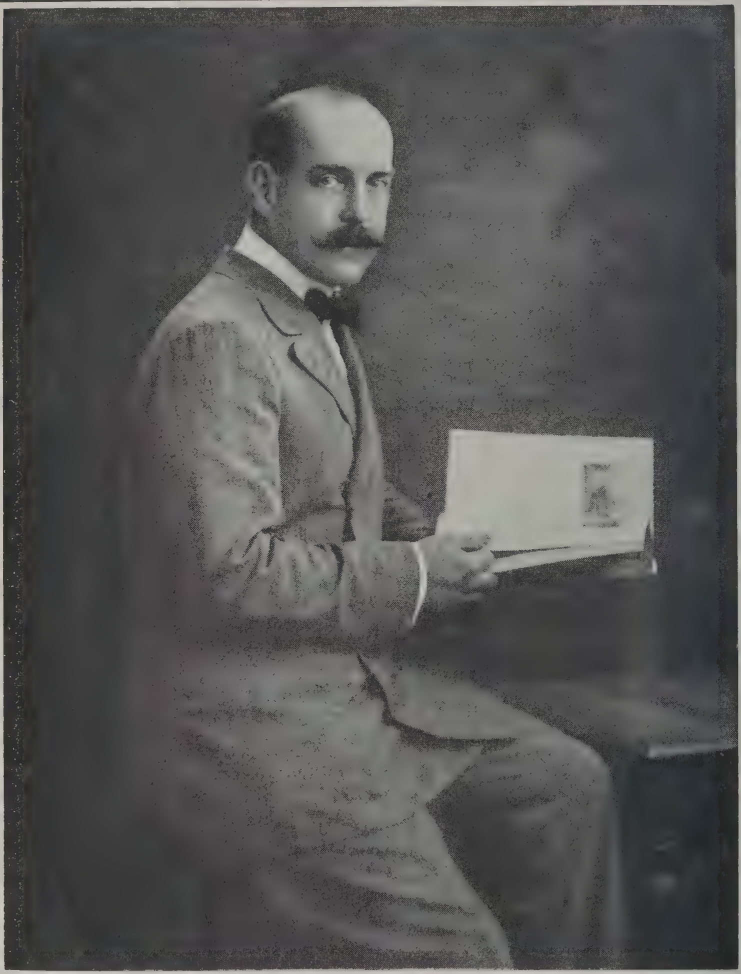
BY WINTHROP BIDDLE

IT is twenty-four centuries, as the current of Time runs, from Salamis to Salonika. At Salamis, 480 years before the Christian era, the great Themistocles frustrated the attempt of Xerxes and his Persian host to wipe the Greek race from the roll of nations.

From Salonika, in 1913, Constantine directed the brilliant military operations which put Greece back on the map. Thus Salamis and Salonika, though separated by the abyss of the ages, are closely related facts in the history of Greece from the dawn of civilization to our own day.

The continuity of the Hellenic race in the yawning interval is an amazing thing in the chronicles of the world. That a people should exist since 480 B.C. is an

THE ROYAL FAMILY OF GREECE, SHOWING KING CONSTANTINE, HIS WIFE AND THEIR FIVE CHILDREN



CONSTANTINE, KING OF GREECE, WHO HAS BROUGHT HIS COUNTRY UP INTO A HIGH PLACE AGAIN

From a photograph by Böhringers, Athens

astonishing achievement in itself. That, after the lapse of the centuries it should retain the qualities of energy, gallantry and endurance which characterized it in the first flush of its manhood, is even more wonderful. In its moral significance the achievement at Salonica is greater than the triumph of Salamis.

Themistocles, when his flotilla of triremes faced the Persian fleet, had behind him splendid traditions of intellectual and artistic achievement, coupled with records of victories on land and sea. Constantine, when he faced the victorious Bulgarians at Salonika, was encumbered with the fresh recollections of a humiliating defeat by the Turks only a few years before. In spite of the handicap, the energetic and enterprising king of the Hellenes, backed by a united people whose ruling passion is patriotism, accomplished the seemingly impossible and revived the glory that was Greece.

When the history of the triumph of Greece in the past two years shall have been written, two names will stand out big, that of King Constantine and his premier, Venezelos.

When Venezelos took office in 1911, the Greek nation was smarting under the humiliating defeats which the Turks had inflicted upon the crown prince, as commander-in-chief of the Greek army in 1897. Greek prestige had been shattered, Greek finances were under the control of a European commission. The prospect of the immediate future was well-nigh as dismal as any nation ever faced. The war of 1897 had been undertaken under great popular pressure, and against the judgment of King George, Prince Constantine and the cabinet, in an attempt to champion the cause of the people of the island of Crete, who had risen in revolt and driven the Turks out.

Yet this was not the end of the Cretan

QUEEN SOPHIA, OF GREECE, SISTER OF KAISER WILHELM II, OF GERMANY

From a photograph by Böhringers, Athens

agitation, so fraught with peril to the Greek nation. A new crisis came in 1909, when the Turkish government, backed by a mandate of the powers, gave Greece the choice of declaring war or renouncing its purpose to proclaim the annexation of the contested island. King George and Crown Prince Constantine realized at this moment that Turkey was itching for war, and that an outbreak of hostilities would expose Greece to a fresh humiliation by the Asiatic hordes.

King and crown prince acted promptly and in perfect agreement. They gave it to be understood that under no circumstances would they consent to the act of annexation for which the Greek nation was clamoring riotously. The peril was averted by the refusal of the government to yield to the delirious popular pressure —but Prince Constantine paid the price. He was compelled by the din of the mob in the street, and by a decree of parliament, to resign his command of the army and to leave the country. At that moment it seemed that never would he be able to rehabilitate himself in public esteem. The tragedy of Themistocles, the Greek, expelled from his fatherland by the jealous hatred of his enemies after he had saved that fatherland at the battle of Salamis, promised to be repeated in the final humiliation of Constantine, the Russo-Dane, who had saved his adopted country

CROWN PRINCE GEORGE, OF GREECE, WHO CARRIES THE SCARS OF BATTLE

From a photograph by Böhringers, Athens

from certain ruin in a record conflict with Turkey, by the sacrifice of his prospective throne.

Wiser counsel prevailed, however. Crown Prince Constantine had not been in exile for three months, when the wind of popular sentiment veered back in his direction, and he was summoned to return. The day of his re-entrance into Athens was a lucky day for Greece.

It was peculiarly fitting, after Greece had been twice checked in her endeavor to liberate the Greeks of Crete from the Turkish domination, that the man who with consummate skill had guided the militant islanders to a successful revolt, should transfer his activities to Athens, to continue in a larger way his activities for the unification of Crete with the motherland of Greece.

Venezelos had not been in office many months when the chancelleries of Europe, which had been accustomed to regard Greece as an international joke and a byword of diplomacy, began to observe the operations of a significant force in the foreign office in Athens. The new minister's conception of his own overmastering purpose in life is summarized in his remark to King George soon after he had taken his portfolio as prime minister and minister of foreign affairs: "Let me have

PRINCE ALEXANDER, SECOND SON OF THE KING OF GREECE

From a photograph by Böhringers, Athens

ELEUTHERIOS VENEZELOS, PREMIER OF GREECE, WHO HAS BEEN A MIGHTY POWER IN REVIVIFYING THE NATION

five years of office, your majesty, and I will give you a new Greece."

The keen eye of Venezelos, a Greek of the Greeks, soon saw that in the crown prince Greece possessed its most valuable asset. He threw himself body and soul into Constantine's plans for the reorganization of the military forces of the country. The army was handed over to French generals for training, a wholesale plan of rearmament and re-equipment was adopted, and the Greek people, from the Parthenon to the last hovel on the boundary of Epirus and the outermost island of the Ægean, were electrified by a fresh appeal to their pride and their love of country. Even to America came the flood of the wave of new sentiment which was destined to accomplish magnificent things on the battlefield. The Greeks living on this side of the Atlantic — merchants, professional men, vendors, waiters and bootblacks— responded quickly and generously to the appeal of the motherland, spoken by the lips of Venezelos. The tenor of the conversation in the Greek restaurants in New York was an echo of the ardent talk in the gay coffee-houses of Athens: "Let us give all we have to the country."

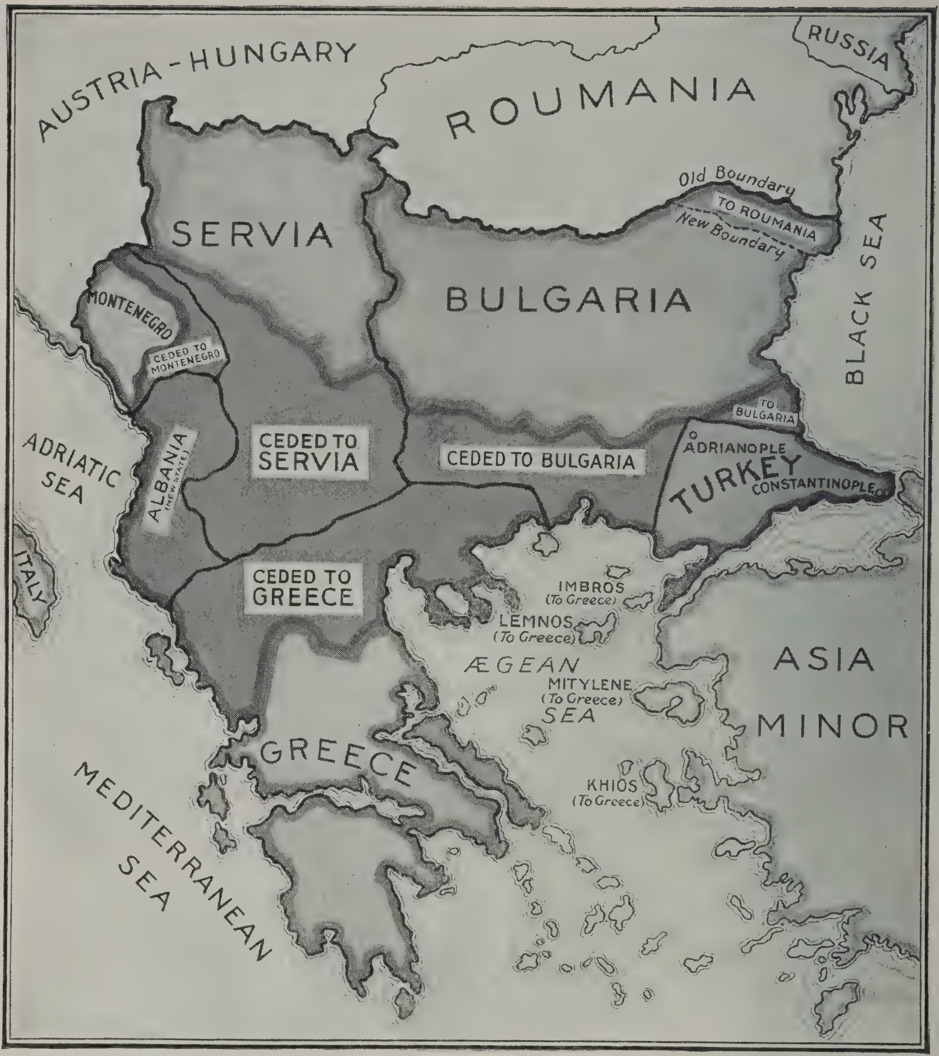
Constantine, the son of a Danish father and a Russian mother, Queen Olga, worked as seldom an heir to a throne had worked before. Democratic to an astonishing degree, the crown prince soon lived down the prejudice engendered by his alien parentage. Venezelos, who realized the need of a striking personality to give concrete expression to his people's ideals, centered his loyalty and his patriotic devotion upon the royal family, and especially upon Constantine, the handsome soldier prince. Prince and minister combined to obliterate the disgrace of the past. The bitter memories of defeat in 1897 and

1909 were forgotten. Forgotten was the hatred which the Greek nation had heaped upon its future king in the moment of national disaster. Constantine became to his people a Greek of the Greeks.

PRINCESS HELEN, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF GREECE, JUST ENTERING HER EIGHTEENTH YEAR

From a photograph by Böhringers, Athens

In the meanwhile, portentous events were going on under the surface in the complicated arena of Balkan politics. How the trend of these events was being controlled directly by the skilful hand of Venezelos, may never be told. The growing uneasiness in the European chancelleries suddenly developed into acute panic in the summer of 1912, when the mysterious operations of a Balkan alliance made themselves felt in the affairs of the world. The outbreak of the war of the allies against Turkey found the machinery of military efficiency at Athens working with the smooth precision of perfection. Con-



THE DARK PORTION OF THIS MAP STRETCHING ALL THE WAY FROM THE BLACK SEA ACROSS TO THE ADRIATIC, A TERRITORY COMPRISING ABOUT 60,000 SQUARE MILES, BELONGED TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST BALKAN WAR (1912). THE GREATEST SLICE OF THIS VAST TURKISH DOMAIN FELL TO GREECE AS THE RESULT OF THE DEFEAT OF BULGARIA IN THE SECOND BALKAN WAR (1913). IN ADDITION TO HER CONTINENTAL GAINS OF MORE THAN 20,000 SQUARE MILES, INCLUDING THE VALUABLE PORTS OF SALONIKA AND KAVALLA, GREECE IS NOW IN A POSITION APPROACHING DOMINANCE OVER THE ÆGEAN SEA, A POSSIBILITY ON WHICH ITALY LOOKS WITH LITTLE COMPLACENCY. THE NEW STATE OF ALBANIA WAS CREATED EXPRESSLY TO KEEP SERVIA FROM HAVING AN OUTLET ON THE ADRIATIC. WITH ITS RECENT ADDITIONS, GREECE IS A NATION OF REAL IMPORTANCE IN SIZE. SHE HAS AN ENDLESS COAST-LINE AND MYRIADS OF ISLANDS. BULGARIA, IT WILL BE SEEN, GOT LESS TERRITORY THAN SERVIA AND EVEN LOST SOME OF HER ORIGINAL TERRITORY TO ROUMANIA.

stantine had done his work well. The Greek people, always keen for that which is new, as in the days of St. Paul, had mastered with fidelity the lessons offered them by their French instructors. King George's appeal to the patriotism of his subjects met with a quick and joyous response from the new nation which Venezelos had promised him. Once more Greece stood in shining armor to meet the foe of the Hellenic race. The memories of Salamis lived again after the lapse of well-nigh twenty-four centuries.

While Constantine, in khaki, was at the

front and his wife, Princess Sophia of Prussia, younger sister of the Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, was scarcely twenty miles behind the vanguard, tending the sick and the wounded, Venezelos sat at his desk in Athens, playing with a sure hand the game of diplomacy in which the stakes were to be a greater Greece.

Constantine had barely accepted the surrender of the Turkish commander at Salonika, when a Bulgarian army arrived in the historic city which was the commercial gem of the late Ottoman Empire. The meeting of Greeks and Bulgarians, in Salonika, the desired, was an historic event. For a thousand years the Bulgars had sought possession of Salonika as their outlet to the open sea. Venezelos saw at a glance that it would take something more than mere diplomatic representations to induce the Bulgarians to abandon the prize of the war with Turkey to the peaceful possession of the Greek nation.

There is every reason to believe that as early as the spring of 1913, when the interrupted negotiations between the Turkish representatives and the plenipotentiaries of the Balkan allies were resumed at the peace conference in London, Venezelos, himself the head of the Greek delegation, was perfecting his plans for a war with Bulgaria. So successful was the outcome of his conferences with Premier Pasitch of Servia and with the Montenegrin delegates, that at the moment when the treaty of peace with Turkey was signed in the British capital, Venezelos was enabled to inform Constantine by cable that Bulgaria had been isolated, that she would have to face, not one nation, but five in the impending struggle. His summary of the situation proved correct when, at the beginning of June, Bulgaria, exhausted by her victorious struggle with the Turks at the points of their greatest strength, in Thrace, found herself surrounded by the steel of the Roumanians at the north, by the combined armies of Greece, Servia and Montenegro at the west and south, and by the reorganized hordes of Turkey to the east and on the Black Sea coast. It was the most desperate military situation that ever a nation faced, and it had been brought about by the consummate diplomatic skill of Eleutherios Venezelos.

The alignment of diplomatic and military forces was well calculated to appeal to the pride of the Greek nation. If the Greeks hate the Turks, their sentiments toward the Bulgarians may be described as the essence of hatred. The Turks are an enemy of yesterday, so to speak. The Bulgarians are a foe with whom the Greeks have been locked in a deadly embrace for at least twelve centuries.

The first gun was fired by a Bulgarian outpost on the Bregalnitsa river at the beginning of July. It was the signal for a concentric advance upon Bulgaria, which was led with great dash and tireless energy by Constantine — now elevated to the throne by the assassination of his father, King George, in Salonika—with the gallant Crown Prince George and the entire Hellenic race, from Smyrna to San Francisco, at his back.

The crowning achievement of Greek diplomacy at the peace conference in Bucharest is a tale of yesterday. With a stroke of the pen Bulgaria, under the pressure of the armies of five nations, renounced Salonika, the much-desired.

With a stroke of the pen the conquered relinquished to the conquerors an empire, of which Greece took the lion's share, nearly doubling her territory by the acquisition of more than twenty-five thousand square miles of the richest part of the former Turkish dominions, and combining about six millions of Greeks under the Greek flag.

At the beginning of the first Balkan war Greece was an uncertain, if not contemptuous, quantity in the calculations of statesmen. At the end of the second conflict she is engaging the jealous attention of at least two of the great powers—Italy and Austria-Hungary.

The ink was hardly dry upon the text of the treaty of Bucharest when the cabinet at Rome began to take serious account of the danger that the new Greece — a Greece flushed with victory and enriched by accessions of productive soil — would seriously menace Italian prestige in the Adriatic and the Ægean.

The new consideration which Greece is enjoying in the councils of the nations was strikingly illustrated last January, when Premier Venezelos made a tour of the chancelleries of Europe, and was received with the honors due to a statesman of the first rank. He laid the foundations for the development of the new territory by signing a contract in Paris for the immediate construction of a railroad line of seventy miles to connect Greece with the rest of Europe by tapping the Oriental railways north of Salonika.

Seventy miles of railroad is a trifling matter as railroads go, even in the Balkans, but this particular seventy miles of rails, already under survey, from Zarali-Zerven, close to the old Turkish border, to Gida, on the line between Veria and Salonika, is of decisive importance to Greece. For many years Greek diplomacy had done its utmost to induce Turkey to permit the laying of the rails on this route, for the purpose of connecting Greece physically with western Europe. Turkey, with crafty purpose to thwart the development of Greek commerce, always had refused the coveted permission. Now Greece has won by the sword the boon that had been denied to her prayers.

In ten months the ancient city of Athens will be within sixty hours of Paris without a change of cars. Thus the country will be outwardly and visibly linked up with the outside world toward which it had vainly struggled for two generations. Athens will be a next door neighbor to Vienna, Berlin, Paris and London.

Now that the immediate problems of the future of Greece have been brilliantly solved, the two men who achieved the memorable results are still maintaining their firm hold upon Grecian affairs and are preparing for the future liberation of the two millions of Greeks still remaining under the Ottoman flag, for the most part in Asia Minor.

King Constantine, after Eleutherios Venezelos, is the most popular man the Greeks have known for many centuries. He is a soldier first of all—a man of simple tastes and democratic manner of life. He is to be seen frequently in the streets of Athens, walking alone or attended only by an aide-de-camp. His consort, Queen Sophia, has endeared herself to her subjects by her great services in the hospitals during the two wars. That she is a thorough Greek at heart, despite her Hohenzollern birth, is to be inferred from the fact that, at the risk of incurring the displeasure of her brother, the German Kaiser, she abandoned the Lutheran Church to unite herself with the communion of her people, the Orthodox Greek church. This brought about a sharp estrangement between her and her imperial kinsman, who only recently has seen the advisability of reconciling himself to the inevitable.

Crown Prince George, a handsome, soldierly young fellow of twenty-four, performed prodigies of valor during the two wars and enjoys the distinction, after being wounded in action at Janina, of being the only living heir to a European throne who bears the scars of battle.

NOCTURNE

Out of the mud—a flower springs,
Nodding its angel head;
Out of a soul some truth is learned
After the flesh is dead.

Out of defeat a victory smiles,
Crowning the aching brow;
Out of the sorrow-laden Past
Greets us the joyous Now.

Deep where some buried Cæsar lies
Blooms there a blood-red flower;
Out of the soul's Gethsemane—
The Resurrection hour!

Out of the rain the rainbow shines,
Pearls from the mist are dew;
Out of my pain the Savior leaned,
Out of the night came—You.

Gladys Hall

SOME INTERESTING FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT DIVORCE

BY OSCAR J. SMITH

TWO million divorces, four million Americans divorced!

There you have, in concrete form, the net, tangible product of America's divorce mill in the forty-seven years since 1867, if the rate of increase of divorce in other years is maintained in 1914. Official record for the years preceding 1867 is not obtainable.

Obviously, the magnitude of the problem as revealed by these figures makes it almost appalling. To realize fully what they mean, let us present them in another way. If lined up, side by side, in a straight perspective, this army of divorced American couples would stretch 800 miles—from New York, for example, across five States to Chicago and beyond, or from Rotterdam, Holland, southwest across Europe to Rome. The *divorcées* alone are as numerous as the huge standing armies of France, Great Britain, and Japan combined.

Up to the end of last year the number of divorces since 1867, according to the official figures to 1906 and estimates for the remaining years based on the previous rate of increase, was 1,921,341. These estimates are conservative and are probably under the actual figures.

In forty-seven years the divorce rate per 100,000 of population has more than quadrupled, jumping from 27 in 1867 to 110 (estimated) in 1913. The number of divorces rose from 9,937 in 1867 to 108,000 in 1913. Up to 1906, official figures show, 1,274,341 divorces were granted. Of these 845,652 were granted to women and only 428,689 to men; that is, in about two-thirds of the cases the wives secured the divorces.

Only about one-third of those who obtain divorces marry again, according to the records of Maine, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, but this should not be interpreted as meaning that about one-third of the divorced couples sought the divorce so that they might contract a new union, for many of those who remarried did not do so for several years.

A variety of causes have contributed to the amazing growth of divorce in America. Chief among them have been these:

The opening of many new avenues of employment for women — avenues undreamed of fifty years ago—which have increased woman's economic independence and enabled her to support herself (a comparison of the growth of these new employments with the growth of the divorce rate would seem to show that they have kept pace with each other); the growth of individualism, and the desire for personal liberty and happiness; the fact that some care less for their souls' salvation than for earthly happiness, while others have evolved the belief that salvation does not depend upon wearing the sackcloth and ashes of marital unhappiness; the education of the masses; the ever-growing belief that love and affection are paramount to the legal obligation of marriage, and that when love has ceased the legal bond should be dissolved; and last, but by no means least, to the lack of any sort of instruction to the young on the subject of marriage, its duties, and responsibilities.

Opinions over the advisability of divorce may differ, but recognition of its presence as an outstanding feature of modern life cannot be evaded. The growth of divorce would seem to show the necessity for humane and reasonable divorce laws: divorce is a remedy, the legal cure for matrimonial wrongs. Destroying the remedy would not remove the wrongs.

Perhaps the greatest evil in connection with divorce in America is the fact that divorce is a matter in which the Federal government has no jurisdiction, the States being supreme in this particular field. This is due to the gradual assumption, by the provincial Legislatures, in colonial times, of the right to grant divorce. The defects in this system proving patent, jurisdiction over divorce was gradually transferred to the courts. There it has remained ever since.

This sovereignty of the States in the matter of divorce has led to a most confusing and complex situation because of the varying requirements for legal divorce in the several States and the States' great diversity in their treatment of the matter.

One of the great evils resulting from this is the fact that a divorce obtained in one State often is not legal in another, and thus the validity of subsequent marriages and the status of the children from such marriages is frequently called into question. The following case, a true one, in which innocent children were made illegitimate merely as a matter of geography, will emphasize the need for action tending to make any divorce, once it is obtained, legal anywhere in the United States.

The husband in this particular instance and his first wife married in Boston in 1887 and lived in Massachusetts for about three years. In 1891 the man moved to South Dakota, became a resident and citizen there in accordance with the laws of that State, and voted at a State election in the fall of that year. Later he brought suit for divorce in the South Dakota courts; his wife contested the suit; but upon a satisfactory money settlement being made with her she withdrew the contest and a decree was given the husband.

Within a day or so after obtaining his decree he returned to Massachusetts, where, at the end of about a year, he married another woman and lived with her in Boston until his death in 1897. Two children were born of this marriage and were living at the time of his death.

After his decease both wives applied for letters of administration on his estate, and in the controversy as to which of the two was the widow the Massachusetts courts held the South Dakota divorce worthless in that commonwealth and decided that the first wife was the widow and entitled to letters. This decision was affirmed on error to the Supreme Court of the United States by a divided court.

Without discussing the merits of this de-

The advance of divorce in the United States from the first year for which official figures are obtainable—1867—to the present time, is shown concretely by the following figures:

Year	Population	Divorces
1867	36,423,856	9,937
1868	37,135,361	10,150
1869	37,846,866	10,939
1870	38,558,371	10,962
1871	39,718,112	11,586
1872	40,877,853	12,390
1873	42,037,595	13,156
1874	43,197,336	13,989
1875	44,357,077	14,212
1876	45,516,818	14,800
1877	46,676,559	15,687
1878	47,836,301	16,089
1879	48,996,042	17,083
1880	50,155,783	19,663
1881	51,402,430	20,762
1882	52,649,076	22,112
1883	53,895,723	23,198
1884	55,142,370	22,994
1885	56,389,017	23,472
1886	57,635,663	25,535
1887	58,882,310	27,919
1888	60,128,957	28,669
1889	61,375,603	31,735
1890	62,947,714	33,461
1891	64,252,400	35,540
1892	65,557,086	36,579
1893	66,861,772	37,468
1894	68,166,458	37,568
1895	69,471,145	40,387
1896	70,775,831	42,937
1897	72,080,517	44,699
1898	73,385,203	47,849
1899	74,689,889	51,437
1900	75,994,575	55,751
1901	77,274,967	60,984
1902	78,576,436	61,480
1903	79,900,389	64,925
1904	81,261,856	66,199
1905	82,574,195	67,976
1906	83,941,510	72,062
1907	85,949,199	*77,000
1908	87,956,888	*82,000
1909	89,964,577	*87,000
1910	91,972,266	*92,000
1911	93,979,955	*98,000
1912	95,987,644	*103,000
1913	97,995,333	*108,000
Total 1867 to 1913 .		1,921,341

*Unofficial.

cision at all, attention is called to the fact that it made two children illegitimate and took the name of wife from their mother; whereas, had the man concerned settled in almost any State of the Union other than Massachusetts when he left South Dakota, and had he in such other State met and married his second wife, that second marriage would have been held good and his innocent children would have been legitimate in every other State than Massachusetts. Thus their legitimacy was merely a question of State lines, of geography.

Here is another striking example, in which a man was imprisoned for bigamy after his first wife had received a divorce and was at liberty to marry again.

The man in this case and his wife were married in Ohio and afterward removed to the State of New York, where the wife deserted her husband and returned to Ohio. She obtained a divorce in the courts of that State in a suit of which her husband had no notice and did not appear and in which the wife obtained a decree by default.

Later he learned of the divorce and, believing the decree operated to divorce him, married again in New York. He was prosecuted for bigamy, convicted, and sentenced to prison, and his conviction was affirmed by the Court of Appeals.

His wife had deserted him and divorced him and was at perfect liberty to marry another in Ohio, while he was sentenced to prison for marrying again in New York. The rule laid down in the opinion of the Court of Appeals of New York in that case still stands as the law of the State and has never been reversed or modified.

The wife's divorce was doubtless good in Ohio and operated to divorce the man there also, so that, had he married his second wife in Ohio instead of New York, he could not have been held guilty of bigamy even though he returned with her to and lived with her in New York. Thus his bigamy (?) was purely a matter of geography.

One last example. A man and his first wife were married in New York in 1868. The pair separated immediately after the wedding and the husband removed to Connecticut. In 1881, thirteen years later, he obtained a divorce in that State in a suit wherein his wife did not appear. Later he married again in Connecticut.

In 1899, thirty-one years after the first marriage, the first wife sued him for legal separation and separate maintenance in the courts of New York and obtained personal service on him.

At the trial he endeavored to introduce the judgment roll of his Connecticut divorce in bar of the suit, but it was rejected on the ground that it was worthless for any purpose in New York. This ruling was by a referee, but was upheld by all the courts to and including the Supreme Court of the United States.

His divorce and second marriage were both good in Connecticut; his first marriage was held to be still good in New York; so that the problem as to which was the real wife was one of geography.

A MATTER OF EVERYWHERE OR NOWHERE

The obvious remedy for the tragic conditions typified by these three examples, which can be duplicated thousands of times in the court records of this country, is, obviously, a law that will obtain from one end of the land to the other. This, of course, in its simplest form would be a Federal divorce law, since experience has shown that it is impossible to get concurrent, uniform legislation from all the States.

The national congress on uniform divorce laws, at its most recent session, in 1906, passed a resolution to the effect that it was the sense of the congress that no Federal divorce law was feasible and that all efforts to secure a Constitutional amendment—a necessary prerequisite—would be futile. The passage of this resolution at that time was but natural, as for years it had been considered inexpedient or impossible to amend the Federal Constitution. But time changes all things, and among them the supposed popular attitude toward tinkering with the Constitution. Twice since the divorce congress met the Constitution has been amended, and doubtless it can be again, as soon as the necessity for a uniform divorce law is grasped by the people.

If Congress is competent to take jurisdiction of an interstate character over illicit relations, as it has done in the Mann so-called white-slave act, it is not easy to understand why it may not also take jurisdiction over marriage and divorce, both of which are obviously of far greater interstate importance.

The efforts of the national congress on

uniform divorce laws have practically failed, but with an amendment to the Federal Constitution and the enactment of a Federal divorce law (probably with concurrent jurisdiction in State and Federal courts) the main object of that congress would be accomplished and the legality of divorce decrees, the validity of subsequent marriages, and the legitimacy of the innocent children would no longer be questions of geography. These, it would seem, are matters of sufficient interstate importance to justify a change that will make divorce decrees legal, marriages valid, and children legitimate in this land everywhere or nowhere. Hope for possible action toward this end lies chiefly in the National Divorce Commission appointed by the President. This commission is now at work.

RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATION NO BAR

During the thirty-three years following the organization of the New England divorce reform league at Boston in 1881 divines, statesmen, educators, and others have labored against the growth of divorce. The perplexing problem has been presented time and again to the conventions of nearly all the churches as a subject for debate and an object for prayer; Congress has been appealed to, and the President pleaded with, to do something; but despite all efforts the divorce rate has persistently increased.

The failure of attempts to check divorce by restrictive legislation is aptly illustrated by the experience of California, as will be shown by the following table and explanation:

CALIFORNIA

Year	Estimated population	Divorces	
		Number	Per 100,000 population
1900	1,485,053	1,649	111
1901	1,574,303	1,732	110
1902	1,663,553	1,733	104
1903	1,752,803	862	49
1904	1,842,053	716	39
1905	1,931,303	1,660	86
1906	2,020,553	1,813	90
1907	2,109,803	2,177	103
1908	2,199,053	2,738	124
1909	2,288,303	3,087	138
1910	2,377,549	3,334	140
1911	2,466,799	3,700	150
1912	2,556,049	3,949	154

In 1903 the so-called interlocutory divorce decree was established in California. Such decrees do not become final until the expiration of one year from the date of judgment. The immediate effect of this law was a large decrease in divorces, but within five years the divorce rate of 1902 was exceeded, and 1912 showed a gain of about fifty per cent in the rate per 100,000 population over the year before the interlocutory decree was established.

Illinois and Wisconsin established the interlocutory decree, without any appreciable effect on the divorce rate, in 1905.

The oldest written divorce law is that of Moses, which reads in part:

> When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, . . . then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it into her hand, and send her out of his home. And when she is departed out of his home, she may go and be another man's wife.

It will be seen that this law was entirely for men—the only advantage a wife gained under it was the right to marry again after being divorced; but for men it was a much broader and easier divorce law than any statute of any civilized State or nation to-day. Given the liberal interpretation which it doubtless received among the ancient Hebrews, a man could divorce his wife, or one of his wives, simply because he did not like her looks.

Notwithstanding this easy divorce law, there were probably few divorces. Wives were property and costly; a poor man was in luck to have one, and luckier to be able to hold her. The wealthy and powerful were prone to gather in those who were fair to look upon, and if a wealthy polygamist got tired of one of his wives it is only fair to assume that he would ignore her and devote himself to the others. For instance, it is hardly probable that Solomon, with some hundred and ninety-nine wives and "near-wives" to fall back upon, ever went to the trouble and expense of a bill of divorcement for any offender.

The early Romans permitted divorces to husbands only, and Plutarch says that Romulus "instituted also certain laws, one of which is somewhat severe, *which suffers not a wife to leave her husband,* but grants a husband power to turn off his wife, either upon poisoning her children, or counterfeiting his keys, or for adultery." This law of Romulus is the first in the history of the world that made a matrimonial offense a prerequisite to divorce.

Speaking of divorce among the Romans, Gibbon says:

> The warmest applause has been lavished on the virtue of the Romans, who abstained from the exercise of this tempting privilege above five hundred years; but the same fact evinces the unequal terms of a connection in which the slave (the wife) was unable to renounce her tyrant, and the tyrant was unwilling to relinquish his slave.

From the beginning of the world woman has been discriminated against in matters of divorce. The law of Moses, and the law of the early Romans, as above stated, permitted divorce to man only, and the same loose rule has prevailed over the entire world among primitive and savage peoples. The only exception in olden times that seems worthy of mention occurred among the Romans who, from about 200 B.C. to about 600 A.D., permitted divorces to women, who were frequent applicants for relief during those years.

The countries which adopted the Roman civil law allowed divorce to woman as long as that law remained supreme, but when it was superseded by the canon law of the church, and all absolute divorces thereby eliminated, woman was then discriminated against in matters pertaining to legal separation.

In France, before the Revolution, the husband could sue for judicial separation on certain grounds that were much easier for him than those allowed to the wife; and to this day in Italy, where partial divorce is the only kind that may be had, a distinction is made in the husband's favor.

From the time of the Reformation in England, about 1534, a husband could obtain an absolute divorce by special act of Parliament, but a wife could not obtain an absolute divorce for any cause, or in any manner whatever, until 1857 — and even since that date the discrimination is largely in the man's favor.

Under the influence of the spirit of freedom which swept over France during the Revolution the view that marriage is a civil contract came to be generally accepted and the right of divorce was demanded by the people.

The national assembly, yielding to this demand and declaring that an indissoluble marriage would be the death of individual liberty, enacted a law in 1792 establishing absolute divorce and abolishing the limited divorce which had prevailed during the supremacy of the canon law and the church. This law was very liberal, and placed woman upon equal terms with man. Two years later Germany adopted a similar law.

Placing women upon a complete political, social, and industrial equality with men, which is certain to come, will have a strong tendency to decrease divorce. With the altruism that will naturally flow from such equality there will spring up greater human happiness; and with greater human happiness there must necessarily be a lessening of divorce.

THE KISS

A KISS I gave at seventeen,
With timid, fluttering fear.
A pale, gray ghost of love it was,
All innocent and dear.

A kiss I gave at twenty-two;
I thought my heart would break;
I loved him so (and love is pain),
But Passion did not wake.

A kiss I gave at twenty-eight;
It burned my lips of red,
For at my side sat Passion's form,
And tender Love lay dead.

A kiss I gave at thirty-four;
All trust and peace and rest;
Though Love and Passion both were gone,
It was the last and best.

Marion Ethel Hamilton

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MONSIEUR DUPOY

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

AUTHOR OF "A PRINCE OF SINNERS," "THE MASTER MUMMER," "CONSPIRATORS," ETC.

BEING THE FIFTH OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF MR. STANLEY BROOKE, THE DELIBERATE DETECTIVE

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION (FRONTISPIECE) BY W. B. KING

SIX months had passed since the day that unique partnership was entered into across the breakfast table in the Waldorf-Astoria, New York. To all appearances Constance Robinson had resumed her vocation as public typist, except that the contrast between her comfortable office of the present, and the bare room in Hender Street in which Brooke first met her, was pleasantly sharp.

Brooke sat by, watching her fingers dance through the transcription of a page.

"What we want," he declared, from the depths of her easy-chair, "is a holiday—a proper summer holiday."

"What you may want," Constance asserted, with emphasis, "has nothing to do with me. What I want is to finish this typing."

He glanced at the machine contemptuously.

"I cannot understand," he exclaimed, "why you go on grinding away at that wretched copying! You get ninepence a thousand words for it. It isn't in the least worth your while."

"Perhaps not," she admitted, "and yet I fancy that I know my own business best. I have explained to you before that it is not the money it brings me in so much as the fact that it gives me a definite station in life. If any inquiries are made about me, I can easily prove that I am a professional typist, with work coming in all the time. It would be very much better for you if you had some corresponding occupation."

Brooke evaded the point.

"Will you come out somewhere for a drive this afternoon?" he asked.

"I will not," she replied calmly. "You ought to have gone down and played golf. As you did not, I wish you would go round to your club or somewhere. You distract me."

He shrugged his shoulders and left her. He found Constance sometimes almost unendurable. Her resolution, her indomitable front towards all his attempts to alter in any way their relations, was beginning to tell upon him.

It was impossible, however, to believe that she was not like other girls. There had even been moments when he had fancied that she had looked at him more kindly, moments when he had certainly permitted himself to hope. Only it was a long time! Personally he felt as far away from her now as on that first day.

She had begun by piquing his curiosity. His vanity had been a little ruffled by her calm resistance of his advances. Then the other things had come—not all at once, but gradually. To-day he knew that there could never be any other woman in the world for him.

At the club he was distrait. He wandered from the card-room, which bored him, abandoned the billiard-room without an effort to play, and finally found himself in the library, the most deserted spot in the club. Its only other occupant laid down his paper at his approach and welcomed him.

"Mr. Brooke," he said, "your coming is rather a coincidence. I was on the point of ringing the bell to ask whether you were in the club."

Brooke looked at the speaker in surprise.

"I didn't even know that you remembered me, Sir William," he remarked, a little dryly.

Sir William Dennison smiled as he drew up his chair. He was a tall, gray-bearded man, well groomed, his beard trimmed Vandyke fashion, a single eyeglass in his left eye. He held an official position under the government, and was quite the most distinguished member of the club.

"On the contrary, I remember you very well," he declared. "It was in Vienna that I last met you."

"I am flattered," said Brooke, easily, "to have remained in your memory so long."

Sir William glanced around the room as though to make sure that they were alone.

"I have heard of you once or twice lately," he announced, "through a friend of mine whom I need not name—you and a young lady—Miss Constance Robinson, I think."

Brooke sat quite still.

"I am told that in one or two cases," Sir William continued, "you have shown, between you, an unusual amount of determination and ingenuity. I have a commission to offer you. Are you prepared to take it?"

"Without a doubt," Brooke answered.

"It doesn't seem, on the face of it, a very interesting affair," Sir William went on. "One can't tell, however, what it might lead to. These are the facts.

"About a fortnight ago a Monsieur Dupoy came over to this country, indirectly on behalf of the French government. I may say that we have received from them, within the course of the last few months, a strong protest against our neglect in the matter of war balloons and aeroplanes generally.

"Dupoy was sent here to attend some experiments at Aldershot, and to be entrusted by us with a complete scheme of our proposed reorganization. He was to have received these at the War Office at twelve o'clock last Friday week. He presented himself at the appointed place at that time but we were not quite ready, and we asked him to call again the next day.

"Dupoy was perfectly willing. I happened to be there myself, and I invited him to dine with me that night, an invitation which he accepted at once. Since then nothing whatever has been seen of Monsieur Dupoy."

"He disappeared?"

"Absolutely!"

"Are you sure that he did not return home?"

"Quite," Sir William replied. "We have communicated with the French government, and through them with his relations. No one has seen or heard anything of him since he left here last Friday week."

"I haven't noticed anything about it in the papers," Brooke remarked.

Sir William smiled.

"The disappearance of Monsieur Dupoy," he said softly, "is not one of those cases which are advertised in the press. It may, of course, have been due to an accident in the ordinary way. The hospitals, however, have been thoroughly searched, and no trace discovered of him. It is a significant fact that, so far as anybody knew, he left the War Office a week ago last Friday with our proposals and our complete scheme in his pocket."

"Where was he staying?" Brooke asked.

"At Delacher's Hotel, on the Embankment."

"Some inquiries have been made there, of course?"

"Naturally. Dupoy was reported to have paid his bill on the Friday morning, to have ordered his bag brought down, and to have gone out for half an hour to buy, he told the hotel clerk, a present for his wife. Since then he has not been heard of."

"Do you suspect any one?" Brooke asked next.

Sir William shrugged his shoulders. He had risen to his feet and was lighting a cigarette from a case which he passed over to Brooke.

"Not with any reason," he answered. "Curiously enough, however, this is the third disappearance from Delacher's Hotel within the last six weeks. It is possible that something may have happened to Dupoy quite apart from the fact that he was supposed to be carrying with him very important political documents.

"I don't know whether the affair appeals to you. If it does, my department will pay exceedingly well for any satisfactory elucidation of the mystery, and will, in any case, be responsible for your expenses if you care to have a look round."

"I am awfully obliged to you, sir," Brooke replied. "Perhaps in a day or two I may have something to report."

Brooke sought no longer to distract himself at bridge or billiards. He took a taxicab and drove back to his rooms, calling, on his way, to see Constance. She looked up at him ominously as he entered, but he only smiled.

"This," he declared, "is no idle visit. Work! Do you know anything about Delacher's Hotel?"

She nodded.

"I know that a few weeks ago there was a diamond merchant from Hamburg who disappeared from there; and a little time before that, a mysterious young woman from St. Petersburg, who had come over to look for a situation as a teacher of languages, went out one morning and never returned."

"Good!" Brooke exclaimed. "There has been a third disappearance—a Frenchman this time."

"How did you hear of it?" she asked quickly.

"A friend of mine," he explained, "a member of the government now, has placed the affair in my hands."

"He has probably heard of you," she remarked quietly, "as my assistant."

"He will hear of me some day as your—" Brooke began.

"Don't be rash," she interrupted. "What are you going to do?"

"I am going to stay at Delacher's Hotel," he replied. "And you?"

"I am going to finish this typing. Tell me, before you go, about this man who has disappeared?"

Brooke imparted to her in a few words all the information he had gained from Sir William. She listened thoughtfully. When he had finished, she turned back to her work.

"I wish you luck. Don't get into trouble," she advised him.

Brooke opened his lips, but the click of the typewriter drowned his words. He moved slowly away. At the door he looked back. Constance was absorbed in her work. He could see only the top of her light brown hair and the flashing of her fingers. With a muttered word he went up to his room.

An hour later he made his way to Charing Cross and, waiting until the arrival of the Continental train, mingled with the little stream of alighting passengers and took a taxicab to Delacher's Hotel. A hall porter received his bag and ushered him in.

Brooke, whose French was perfect, asked for a room in the name of Monsieur Dupoy. The clerk stared at him for a moment. The head porter, who was a tall, olive-skinned person, with a black mustache, also leaned forward with interest.

"Monsieur Dupoy!" the clerk repeated, with the pen in his hand.

Brooke nodded, and glanced around as though to make sure that no one else was within hearing.

"To tell you the truth," he announced, "I come here on behalf of the family. Only the week before last, a cousin of mine was staying in this same hotel. He was to have returned to Paris last Friday week. He did not arrive. We have sent him many messages and letters. There has been no reply. It was arranged that I should come over to make inquiries."

"We have already written," the clerk remarked, "informing Madame Dupoy that her husband left here on the Friday morning, for the purpose, he said, of buying her a present. He did not return. He had so little luggage that we imagined he had been kept until the last moment and then had taken the train without it, sooner than be delayed."

Brooke nodded.

"Up till last night," he declared, with a little gesture, "my cousin had not returned. Therefore, I am here. Give me a room. I do not know what I can do, but we shall see. One must try the police."

The clerk handed him a round ticket.

"You can have the room which your cousin occupied, Monsieur Dupoy," he said—"No. 387, on the third floor. As to the police, it is, of course, your affair, but I trust you are satisfied that nothing happened to Monsieur Dupoy under this roof?"

"Entirely," Brooke replied. "All the evidence goes to show that he left here, as you have told me, to buy this present."

Brooke was ushered to the lift. Until he disappeared, he noticed that the head porter was watching him with ill-concealed curiosity. He was shown into an ordinary hotel bedroom on the third floor, with an outlook on the Thames.

The furniture was of the plainest, and there was no communicating door into any other room. Brooke opened his bag, took out his clothes, and glanced at his watch. It was a quarter to eight. He decided to dine in the restaurant down-stairs without changing, and accordingly rang the bell and ordered some hot water. The chambermaid wished him good evening pleasantly. He slipped a half-crown into her hand.

"I may leave at any moment," he explained. "I give you this now."

She grabbed the money and beamed at him.

"The gentleman is very gracious," she declared, with a strong German accent.

Brooke broke into fluent German.

"You knew the occupant of this room," he inquired, "who was here the week before last—Monsieur Dupoy?"

She nodded.

"He left his bag behind him," she said. "He departed in a great hurry."

"You didn't happen to see him before he started, I suppose?" Brooke asked.

"Yes!" she answered. "Yes! He came in and washed his hands. It was the middle of the morning. He went out to eat. I know because he said to me: 'The food down-stairs,' he said, 'it is good, but the room is dull. I will go somewhere more lively.' He said that to me while I poured out his hot water."

"Nothing about buying a present for his wife?" Brooke inquired.

The girl shook her head.

"Not to me did he speak of such a person."

Brooke whistled softly as he went down-stairs. As he crossed the hall he heard the sound of voices raised in altercation. The head porter was speaking angrily to a subordinate, who had apparently come late to relieve him. Brooke bought a paper and went into the restaurant.

He dined fairly well, but his surroundings were certainly depressing. A band, not of the first order, was playing. There were only a few diners, and these were obviously foreigners of the commercial type. One or two of the men seemed to be talking business. There were barely half a dozen women in the room. As soon as he had finished his meal, he strolled out into the hall. The man who had relieved the head porter was standing on the door-step. Brooke strolled up to him and lit a cigarette.

"Disagreeable looking fellow, your head porter," he observed.

"It is a wonder," the man grumbled, "that any of us stay here with him. If the management only knew—"

He hurried off to procure a taxi for a departing guest. Brooke awaited his return.

"Queer appearing fellow altogether," he said softly. "He looks more like a head-waiter than anything."

"He was a waiter before he took on this job," the porter remarked. "He has got a restaurant of his own now, they say. Shouldn't care to go to it myself."

"Why not?" Brooke inquired.

The man hesitated. He looked more closely at his questioner.

"No particular reason, sir. I don't like Paul, that's all. You'll excuse me, sir."

He walked off to attend to some alighting passengers. Brooke noticed that he seemed rather to avoid returning. When he was disengaged, however, Brooke called softly to him.

"Tell me, what is your name?" he asked.

"My name is Fritz, sir," the man replied.

"Do you happen to know mine?" Brooke continued.

"No, sir!"

"My name is Dupoy."

"Indeed, sir? We had a Monsieur Dupoy here quite lately."

"My cousin," Brooke declared. "He was to have returned to Paris last Friday week. He never came, and we have been very anxious. That is why I am here."

The porter edged a little away.

"I should go to the police, sir, and make inquiries," he suggested.

"There are certain reasons," Brooke said slowly, "why I would rather not do that. I thought I might be able to pick up some information here. I am willing to pay for it."

The man smiled in somewhat mysterious fashion.

"If I were you, sir," he whispered, confidentially, "I should ask—"

"Whom?" Brooke demanded.

"Paul!"

Again he went about his business, and again Brooke waited. When he came back, however, he was uncommunicative. He kept looking behind toward the office.

"You will forgive me if I speak plainly, sir," he said. "My first instructions when I got the job here were to keep my mouth shut. I've got a wife and children and I can't afford to run any risks. If they see you here with me and know you're making inquiries, they'll think I'm gassing."

Brooke slipped a sovereign into his hand.

"What time does Paul come on duty?"

"Not for another hour, sir," the man replied. "He is having his dinner."

Brooke strolled back into the hotel and asked for the manager, Mr. Delacher, who turned out to be a very polite but somewhat somber-looking personage. Brooke introduced himself as a cousin of Monsieur Dupoy.

"I don't know," he said, "whether you remember my cousin? He stayed here for a day or two, and then, on the day when he should have returned home, he absolutely disappeared."

"I remember Monsieur Dupoy perfectly," the manager admitted. "It is true that he did not return, but as he had paid his bill and said that he was going by the two-twenty, we concluded that he would send for his luggage afterwards."

"You cannot help me in any way, then?" Brooke asked. "He has a wife who is altogether in despair at his absence."

Mr. Delacher was only mildly sympathetic.

"My guests," he explained, "come and go. Of their doings I keep no count. How Monsieur Dupoy spent his time I cannot tell. All that I know is that he paid his bill, which seems to prove that he meant to depart. You will probably find, sir, that he will return presently. He is perhaps at home by now."

"I thank you very much," Brooke said. "By the bye, the face of your head porter seemed to me so familiar. Have I seen him at any of the hotels on the Continent, I wonder?"

Mr. Delacher shook his head.

"Paul has been with me for twelve years. Before that, he was at the Savoy in Berlin. He is a very valuable servant."

"Without a doubt," Brooke assented. "I suppose, then, if I want to find my cousin you would advise me to apply to the police?"

Mr. Delacher shrugged his shoulders.

"I can see no other course, *monsieur*."

Brooke strolled out along the Embankment for half an hour. When he returned, Paul was on duty—tall, austere, magnificent. He saluted Brooke in a dignified manner, but he watched him all the time as one who was scarcely satisfied. Brooke came to a standstill.

"Paul," he said, "it is a saying in Paris that the chief porter at a London hotel can tell you anything in the world you may want to know."

"It is an exaggeration, *monsieur*," the man replied.

"It may be," Brooke admitted. "Who can say? I search everywhere for my cousin, Eugène Dupoy. It is you who saw him last. You cannot even tell me where it was that he intended to lunch before he returned for his bag?"

Paul regarded his questioner in melancholy fashion.

"I cannot tell *monsieur* that," he admitted.

"You did not know, even, how he spent his time here?"

Paul shook his head.

"He seemed to be occupied with affairs," he announced. "On the morning of his unexpected departure, he left in a state of some excitement. He had an important engagement, he said, at twelve o'clock."

Brooke nodded.

"That is so," he said, confidentially. "The appointment, however, was postponed."

Paul turned slowly round. His manner, in a sense, was changing.

"Some papers which my cousin was expecting were not completed," Brooke continued. "A little affair of business. I myself am to fetch them to-morrow from the same place. That, however, is beside the point."

There was no doubt but that Paul was an altered man. His frigidity of demeanor had departed. He apparently took the liveliest interest in his questioner.

"I am very sorry indeed, sir," he said, "that I cannot help you. Monsieur Dupoy was a charming guest. He will, I am sure, return home safely. *Monsieur* remains with us long?"

Brooke shrugged his shoulders.

"What is the good?" he demanded. "Where am I to look for my dear cousin? I cannot tell. I shall finish the little matter of business which he was obliged to leave undone, and return to Paris."

"You are not anxious, then, about your relation, sir?" Paul asked.

Brooke shook his head.

"This," he declared, "is London. Things do not happen here. It may well be an affair of a letter, ill-directed or missing. Eugène may have gone on the Continent. Who can tell?"

Paul was standing with his hands behind him. It was between nine and ten o'clock and there was nothing whatever doing.

"It seems strange, *monsieur*," he remarked, "that your cousin did not finish his business here, after all."

"It is nothing," Brooke answered. "Certain papers were not ready. I myself take possession of them at eleven o'clock to-morrow. I think that I shall do exactly what Eugène would have done—pay my bill when I leave here in the morning, return for my bag, and catch the two-twenty."

"I will give orders, sir," Paul said. "You will lunch here, sir?"

"Probably," Brooke replied. "It is not amusing but, although I speak English so well, I am almost a stranger in London."

"If I might venture," Paul suggested slowly, "there is a little restaurant in a street leading off Shaftesbury Avenue—I could give *monsieur* the address — where the cooking is altogether French. A most interesting place! *Monsieur* might see there a great singer, a dancer, an artist. The French ladies who have succeeded in London, they go there at midday. It is worth a visit."

"The place for me, Paul!" Brooke exclaimed. "Write it down on a piece of paper."

Paul obeyed promptly.

"It is called the Café Hollande, *monsieur*," he said, handing over the card. "There are two floors. You go downstairs and ask for Jean Marchand. You will, I think, be exceedingly well served."

"I'll try, at all events," Brooke decided. "I suppose I shall have plenty of time to return here and catch the two-twenty?"

"It would be advisable, *monsieur*," Paul proposed, "if your bag were sent to the station to meet you. The account could be paid before you leave in the morning."

"It is excellent," Brooke declared. "Good night, Paul!"

The man saluted.

"Good night, *monsieur!*"

Brooke slept well, was called at a reasonable hour in the morning, visited the hairdresser after his breakfast, and at eleven o'clock strolled out to the front and instructed Paul to procure him a taxicab.

"I shall do as you suggested, Paul," he remarked. "I have paid my bill. After I have finished my business, I shall call at Scotland Yard and inquire about my cousin."

The man assented gravely.

"I trust, *monsieur*," he said, "that you will receive good news. Also that you will like my little restaurant. *Bonjour et bon voyage, monsieur!*"

Brooke was driven in a taxi to the War Office. Sir William, who happened to be in the building and disengaged, received him at once.

"Any news?" he asked, laconically.

"Not yet," Brooke replied. "So far, it has been an affair of routine. I am supposed to be here to receive a document from you—drawings, and all that sort of thing. Can I have a bundle made up?"

Sir William nodded and gave a few instructions.

"When one comes to think of it," he said thoughtfully, "it is rather a serious thing that this fellow Dupoy should have disappeared in the heart of London. Where are you going when you leave here?"

"I am going exactly where Dupoy went. I am going to lunch in a little restaurant off Shaftesbury Avenue, strongly recommended to me by a person whom I suspect was interested in Dupoy's disappearance. I expect there to obtain at any rate a hint."

Sir William nodded in an interested manner.

"You fellows do get some fun out of life," he remarked, a little enviously. "I should rather like to lunch with you."

Brooke shook his head.

"I wouldn't, Sir William," he advised. "If I am on a clue at all, it is a very thin one, and this sort of people are easily put off. I think I had better go alone."

"Anyhow," Sir William suggested, "you'd better let me know the name of the restaurant, in case you do the disappearance trick, or anything of that sort."

Brooke scribbled it down upon a piece of paper. Then, with a sealed packet in his hand which he had the air of endeavoring to conceal as much as possible, he left the building and reentered his taxicab.

He drove first to Scotland Yard where, for the sake of appearances, he made a few aimless inquiries about Inspector Simmons, who was out of town. At a quarter to one he was set down outside the Café Hollande.

He entered the place and looked around him for a minute. Although it was early, a great many of the tables were occupied, nearly all apparently by foreigners. There was a small orchestra playing from somewhere below, a large desk at which an elderly woman was busy making out accounts, mirrored walls, muslin curtains not absolutely clean, the usual appurtenances of a restaurant on the borders of Soho. A little dark man came hurrying towards him, his face wreathed in smiles.

" Jean Marchand?" Brooke asked.

" But certainly, *monsieur,*" the little man replied. " It is Monsieur Paul who has sent you here?"

" Paul of Delacher's Hotel," Brooke admitted.

Jean glanced around the room.

" Up here, *monsieur,*" he confided, " it is at all times a little noisy—not entirely *comme il faut*. I recommend to *monsieur* my favorite table below. This way."

Brooke followed his guide down the stairs into a large and somewhat empty apartment, in which were set a few tables only. At the bottom of the stairs an orchestra of three musicians was playing. At the farther end of the room was a long table covered with bottles, watched over by a *maître d'hôtel*. There were only one or two people lunching.

" It is not yet one," Jean explained. " Between one and half past this room will be crowded. There are celebrities who come here. I myself will point them out to *monsieur*. I recommend this table—the one in the corner."

" But it is already occupied," Brooke remarked, glancing with a slightly puzzled air at the girl in the corner, who seemed on the point of raising her veil.

" The adjoining table, then, *monsieur,*" Jean begged. " *Monsieur* may make himself comfortable. I myself will return to take his order for luncheon."

Jean retreated with smooth haste. Brooke advanced slowly towards the corner of the room indicated. Then he stopped short. The girl had raised her veil.

" Constance!" he exclaimed.

" You!" she echoed.

Brooke took a seat opposite to her.

" What on earth does it mean?" he cried.

She tore open a letter which lay on the table by her side. She glanced through the few lines and passed it across to him.

" A man called upon me this morning," she explained. " He asked for my aid in a certain private matter. The first step was that I should lunch here at a table which should be pointed out by a *maître d'hôtel* named Jean Marchand, and that I should open this letter if a neighbor should take the adjoining place. Read."

Brooke snatched at the half sheet of notepaper. Across it was written in a bold, sprawling hand—

> Good fortune and good appetite to Monsieur Dupoy from Paris, and *mademoiselle,* his charming partner!

Brooke looked up at Constance and met her eyes steadily fixed upon his.

" This means—" he said slowly.

The wrinkles began to form around her eyes. She was beginning to laugh.

" It means that you have run up against some one even cleverer than we are," she declared. He looked at her with a little of that old-time cast of imbecility on his face.

" A philosophical attitude," Brooke insisted at length, " is our best rôle. We came here to lunch—we will lunch. We will lunch well."

Certainly there was nothing to be complained of in the cooking at the Café Hollande. The service was a little slow and there was a queer sense of emptiness in the room. All the time there was a great tumult of voices and footsteps up-stairs, but Jean's prophecy as to the filling up of this particular room was in no way carried out. As though by mutual consent, neither Constance nor Brooke talked of the disappearance of Dupoy. It was only over their coffee, during the last few moments, that the subject was mentioned.

" I made a mistake, of course," Brooke confessed. " It was foolish of me even to show myself at Delacher's Hotel."

She nodded. Soon afterwards they rose and, Brooke having paid the bill, they ascended the stairs and walked out into the street, without having seen anything further of Jean Marchand. As they passed along Shaftesbury Avenue, Constance, who had been looking into a shop-window, touched Brooke on the arm.

"We are being followed," she whispered. "A man who stood on the other side of the street as we came out, is trailing us now."

"What is he like?" Brooke asked, with a sudden hope.

"He looks like a porter of some sort at an hotel or club," she answered. "He has on dark blue trousers, an ordinary coat, and a cap. He is rather florid—"

Brooke gently guided her down a narrow street which they were passing.

"It is the man I wanted to see," he declared softly. "Is he still following us?"

She nodded. Almost directly he stepped up.

"You want to speak to me, Fritz?" Brooke inquired.

"Yes, sir," the man replied, "but not here. If you please!"

He plunged through the door of a public-house. Brooke and Constance, without hesitation, followed him. It was an ordinary little place, half café, half public-house, almost empty. They sat at a small table away from the window. Brooke ordered something to drink. Fritz leaned forward.

"This morning," he announced, "after you left, I was dismissed. That man Paul, he thinks that all are fools. He thinks that one sees nothing. He is wrong. Monsieur Dupoy, I am here to speak of your cousin."

"It is good," Brooke said, nodding. "Go on."

Fritz looked around him.

"I am a poor man," he continued. "I had a good place until one day Paul he took a dislike to me. Now I am turned away. Places are hard to get. I have a wife and children. I must do the best I can. It is for that reason that I said to myself—'Why should I not profit by the things which I have observed?'"

Brooke brought out his pocketbook.

"You are an exceedingly sensible fellow, Fritz," he declared. "Now tell me what information you have to offer, and we will talk business."

Fritz nodded.

"Directly," he said, "but first, *monsieur*, what were you doing so long in the Café Hollande?"

"I had lunch there," Brooke told him, dryly.

The face of Fritz seemed suddenly blanched. He stared at them both.

"*Monsieur* lunched there!" he repeated. "Down-stairs?"

"Down-stairs," Brooke admitted.

Fritz took the glass of brandy which had been offered, and drank it off.

"You have the good fortune, *monsieur*," he muttered. "It was not so with your cousin when he lunched there downstairs."

"What happened to him?" Brooke asked quickly.

Fritz shook his head.

"There are things," he declared, "which, if I knew, I would not dare to speak of. Indeed, I do not know. This is my offer to *monsieur*. For twenty pounds I will take him to his cousin."

Brooke placed the money without hesitation upon the counter. Fritz buttoned it up in his pocket and rose.

"Understand, *monsieur*," he said in the doorway, "that when I point to the house where you will find Monsieur Dupoy, I have finished. If you seek for me, it will be useless. I know nothing. I keep my bargain when I show you the house which shelters Monsieur Dupoy."

"It is agreed," Brooke assured him.

They walked out into the street. Fritz kept about a dozen yards ahead. They crossed Shaftesbury Avenue, traversed another narrow street for a short distance, and then turned abruptly to the right. There was a newsagent's shop, with a notice in the window—"Rooms to let for single gentlemen." Fritz pointed to it.

"There, *monsieur!*"

Almost as he uttered the words he stepped aside to avoid a passing dray. When it had gone, Fritz, too, had disappeared. He had plunged once more into the throng of people.

Brooke and Constance entered the shop. A Frenchwoman was behind the counter, stout, untidy, with black hair all over her face. Brooke took off his hat.

"Have you, *madame*," he asked, "a lodger here of the name of Dupoy?"

She stretched out her hands.

"But, *monsieur*," she said, "I have a lodger here whom I do not know. His name is as likely to be Dupoy as anything else. *Monsieur* would like to see him?"

Brooke followed her up the crazy stairs. Constance came behind. They were ushered into a tiny bedchamber. A man, partly dressed, lay upon a sofa, his head propped up by two or three pillows. He stared at them eagerly as they came in, and his lips moved, but he said nothing. His clothes hung about him shapelessly. He had a beard of a week or so's growth upon his chin. His head was tied up with a bandage.

"Dupoy?" Brooke exclaimed.

The man stared at him but remained speechless. *Madame* shook her head.

"He talks only nonsense," she declared. "All the time he asks who he is. But listen, it is the doctor who comes. You shall speak with him yourself."

The doctor knocked at the door and entered. He bowed with a little flourish to Constance.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it is perhaps the friends of the unfortunate *monsieur?*"

"Tell me what has happened to him?" Brooke asked.

The Frenchman stretched out his hands.

"*Madame* can tell you as much as I," he said. "Last Friday week he tottered into the shop, very much as he is now, his head bound up, desperately ill. She fancies that an unseen hand propelled him. That may or may not be so. His pockets were cut open as though he had been searched. She brought him up-stairs and sent for me. Since then I have attended him every day. He was suffering from a terrible blow on the head, which has unfortunately produced, as you see, a complete loss of memory."

"If his head was bound up, he had already been treated for the blow when he came in?" Brooke remarked. "It was not an accident, then, which had happened in the street?"

The doctor shook his head in most mysterious fashion.

"*Monsieur,*" he said, "almost I felt it my duty to communicate with the police. The wound when I examined it—it is beginning to heal now—gave me the impression of having been made by a surgeon's knife. It takes a certain course. Its effect has been this loss of memory and apprehension. The poor fellow knows nothing. The wound is healing, but for the rest, who can tell?"

There was a brief silence in the room.

"He had money?" Brooke asked slowly.

The woman's eyes were suddenly covetous. She exchanged a rapid glance with the doctor, who coughed and looked away.

"He had money," she admitted slowly. "There is little left now, though. We have taken for his board and the doctor has taken for his bills. There is little remaining."

Again there was silence. The doctor was affecting to examine his patient. Brooke walked to the window—dusty, and smothered with a filthy muslin blind. He looked across the housetops for a moment. The instinct of the detective was suddenly crushed by a stronger feeling—a passionate sympathy with this poor stricken creature, an angry craving for revenge.

The woman had sidled out of the room. They could hear her heavy footsteps upon the stairs. The doctor was bending over his patient. Brooke turned back to Constance.

"We have found Dupoy," he said, "after all, but there are other things to be done."

* * * * *

Within a week, several things happened. Dupoy was formally identified, and died without having recovered his memory. The Café Hollande was searched quietly but closely from floor to ceiling, without the slightest result. The body of Fritz was discovered floating in the Thames.

Paul was so much upset by these and other happenings that he was confined to his room for a fortnight with a severe nervous breakdown. Ultimately, however, to the great satisfaction of a large number of travelers, he was able to take up once more his duties as head porter at Delacher's Hotel.

THE WAY OF LOVE

Oh, one does the loving—the other is mute;
One sits in deafness and one pipes his flute,
So I laughed as I counted my worth in pure gold
And gave him my heart as a jewel is sold;
But the youth in me flamed at his first tender touch—
And I loved and I piped and I gave overmuch,—
Yet I'd rather go soaring and venture a fall
Than die never knowing the heavens at all!

Jane Burr

JOSE COLLINS IS THIS SEASON ONE OF MR. ZIEGFELD'S MOST IMPORTANT "FOLLIES," 1913 MODEL

From her latest photograph by White, New York

THE HARASSED HEROINE

HER TYPE HAS CHANGED, BUT ON THE STAGE THE VILLAINS STILL PURSUE HER

BY BURNS MANTLE

WHAT would the drama do without its suffering sisterhood? Let the militant suffragettes consider that as a campaign issue to prove the attitude of the domineering male!

The conventionally frail maiden of the theater is not as prominent as she was in the old melodramatic days, though penitency is still a virtue and the black gown a symbol of chastened character. Sunbonneted *Esmeralda,* for instance, would be a joke in these days of supreme sophistication and *Hazel Kirke* a simple, tearful booby. There has been a distinct change in type.

But the abused heroine is with us still. She is now, as she has been from the days of " The Mourning Women " of Æschylus and the wailing Hecuba of Euripides, at once the weakness and the strength of the serious drama in which the suffering male is a mere incident. No longer than four years ago the late Stanley Houghton wrote a play called " The New Sin " that was all about unhappy men and, as a moneymaker, it failed hopelessly.

It is the distressed heroine who is popular. "Let me suffer or I perish " might reasonably be her accepted challenge for popularity. The more she suffers the more she pays, pays, pays—into the box-office.

This is not, however, to be accepted as a statement that there are no happy women in the dramatist's list. He usually has a number of minor characters — gentle mothers who knit, and self-sacrificing sisters who never marry — to point the needed contrasts. It is merely to show that it is upon his suffering heroine that he leans most heavily.

Neither is it necessary to go back to the Greeks to impress the logic of so obvious a statement. The wailing ladies of the early drama represent merely the foundation on which the fashion in heroines has rested for centuries.

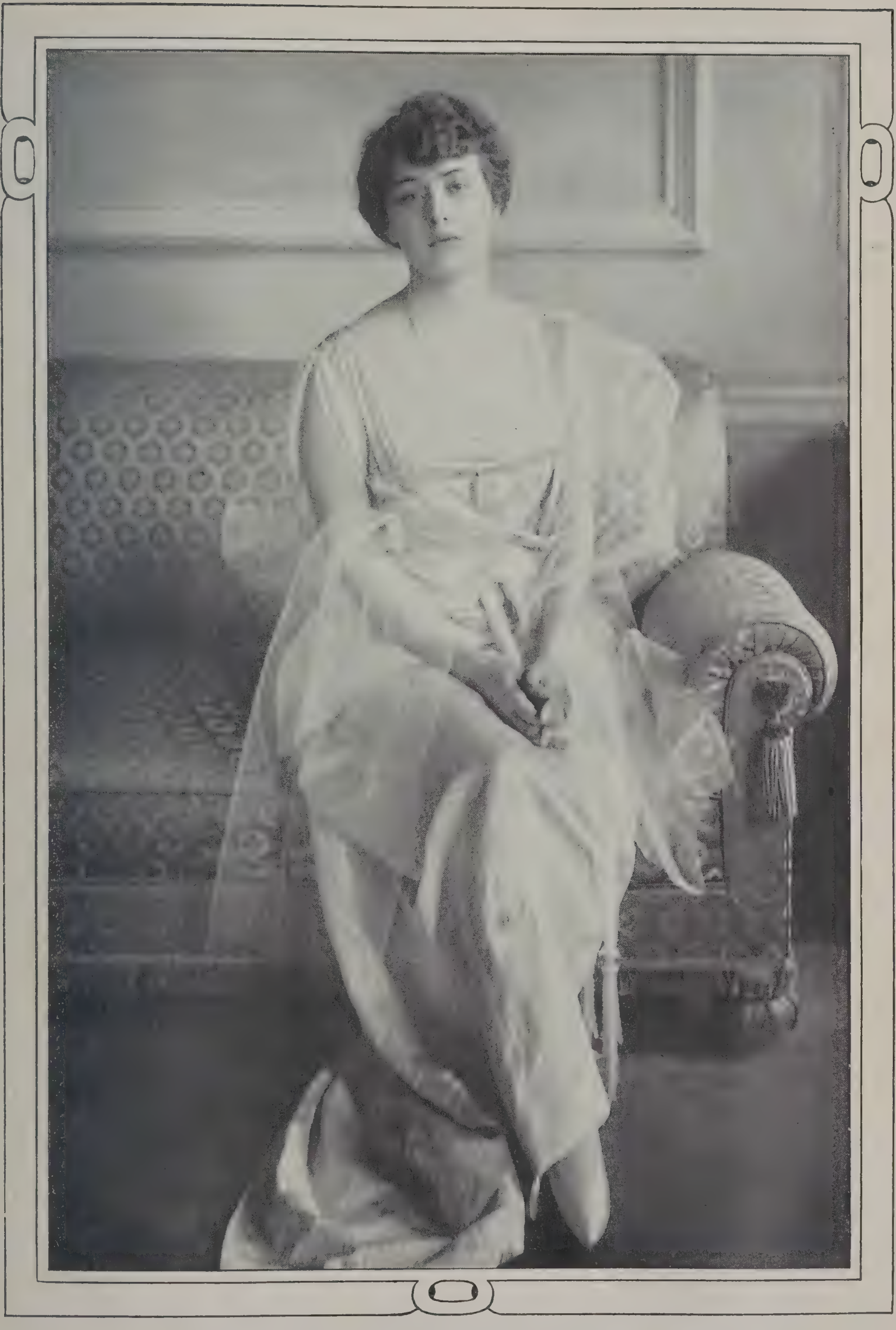
They were responsible for the militant but gloomy females of Racine and Corneille, for the defeated *Juliet*, the misery-haunted daughters of *Lear*, the unlucky *Desdemona*, and *Ophelia* the demented.

In spirit they have been reintroduced periodically by every dramatist of consequence in the history of the theater—by Goethe and Schiller, by Sudermann and Hauptmann, by Ibsen and Strindberg, by Hugo, Voltaire, Dumas and Sardou, and—modified to suit the times—by Pinero and Jones, Stephen Phillips and John Galsworthy.

VENITA FITZHUGH, AT PRESENT LEADING WOMAN IN "THE LAUGHING HUSBAND," COMES FROM ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, AND IS OF A THEATRICAL FAMILY. HER MOTHER, IDA FITZHUGH, HAS APPEARED IN VARIOUS MUSICAL COMEDIES

From a photograph by White, New York

But we do our theatergoing in the present, more particularly in the immediate present, with a pleasant hopefulness directed toward the future. And it is in the theater of the present that we find our best illustration. "Waste not fresh tears over old griefs." We have enough griefs that are new. Observe:



ELSIE FERGUSON HAS WON THE MOST IMPORTANT SUCCESS OF HER CAREER AS A STAR THIS SEASON IN "THE STRANGE WOMAN." SHE PLAYS A FREE-THINKING PARISIENNE WHO IS REFORMED IN DELPHI, IOWA

From her latest photograph by Geisler, New York

VALLI VALLI WAS BORN IN BERLIN, GAINED HER FIRST STAGE EXPERIENCE IN LONDON, AND, SINCE 1905, HAS SPENT MOST OF HER TIME IN AMERICA. THIS SEASON SHE HAS SCORED AS THE HEROINE IN "THE QUEEN OF THE MOVIES"

From her latest photograph by White, New York

There is the unhappy lady in "The Yellow Ticket," Miss Florence Reed. She is living in a Russian province in which neither she nor her people, who are of the Jewish faith, are privileged to go and come as they will. She is eager to reach St. Petersburg in order to be near her father, who is seriously ill. She applies for a passport and is told that there is but one kind she may have, that one being a "yellow ticket."

The yellow ticket in Russia is the badge of the woman of the streets. Signing it, she is presumed thus to enter the service of the government and is permitted to travel where she will. Miss Reed as the heroine, ignorant of the true significance of the step she is taking; knowing only that with a yellow ticket she may go to her father, who needs her, while with none she must remain where she is, signs the fateful slip.

For several years she avoids the consequences of her impulsive action. She assumes the name and family history of a girl roommate, a Christian, who had died. But the Russian secret police hunt her out, and reveal her accepted standing in Russian society to the English gentleman who, at the opening of the play, has employed her as his daughter's traveling companion. Her disgrace is also made known to a young American newspaper correspondent, handsome Jack Barrymore, who has come to love her.

Very simply and very eloquently Miss Reed tells the true story of how she came by the yellow ticket, and with character-

VIOLET KEMBLE COOPER, WHO CAME TO AMERICA LAST YEAR WITH HER FATHER, FRANK KEMBLE COOPER, HAS REMAINED TO PLAY THE ELOPING DAUGHTER IN "PEG O' MY HEART." SHE REPRESENTS ONE OF THE OLDEST THEATRICAL FAMILIES IN ENGLAND

From a photograph by Bangs, New York

INA CLAIRE IS STILL WAITING FOR ANOTHER PART AS GOOD AS THAT WITH WHICH SHE FIRST WON HER FAME—THE HEROINE IN "THE QUAKER GIRL." MEANTIME SHE HAS EXPERIMENTED BOTH WITH MUSICAL COMEDY AND VAUDEVILLE

From a photograph by Moffelt Studio, Chicago

istic journalistic heroism Mr. Barrymore determines to save her, no matter what dangers the author, Mr. Michael Morton, may put in his way.

From that time forth till the end of the play Miss Reed is miserably unhappy. In the second act, to protect herself from the attack of the chief of the secret police himself, she is forced to stab that gentleman with her hatpin, which she does with the same effective result obtained some years ago by a certain impulsive prima donna in a Sardou drama you may remember as "La Tosca." Later Miss Reed is jailed, but young Mr. Barrymore is still on the job. With the aid of the American embassy, added to the threat that should he, as a newspaperman, tell all he knew about the character of the dead police official it would probably scandalize the world, he succeeds in saving her. We leave them conventionally posed, chest to chest, eye to eye, lips to lips.

A MILITANT MURDERESS

Dorothy Donnelly, as the young woman who extracts such sympathy as there is to be found in "Maria Rosa," a play from the Spanish of Angel Guimera, is also a poor suffering thing. She is a Catalonian grape picker, and much in love with the young man she has married. One day there is a fight and the foreman for whom they work is killed. Dorothy's husband is accused of the murder, arrested on an accumulation of circumstantial evidence, and dies in his cell from grief.

Thereafter Dorothy is pursued by Lou Tellegen. You may remember him as the young Greek who served as Mme. Bernhardt's leading man on her last farewell tour. Tellegen, in the play, has been the best friend of the dead husband, and would marry the widow. For a year the unhappy heroine puts him off, struggling pathetically to remain true to the memory of her lost love. Then she marries him and discovers on their wedding night, when with him the wine is in and the wit is out, that it was he

JANE COWL'S SUCCESS IN "WITHIN THE LAW" HAS DEFINITELY FIXED HER POSITION AS ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING OF THE YOUNGER AMERICAN STARS. IN PRIVATE LIFE SHE IS THE WIFE OF ADOLPH KLAUBER, FOR MANY YEARS A PROMINENT DRAMATIC CRITIC

From her latest photograph by White, New York

EMILY STEVENS WAS RATHER HANDICAPPED IN HER EARLY CAREER BECAUSE, AS MRS. FISKE'S NIECE, MUCH WAS EXPECTED OF HER. SHE NOT ONLY HAS OVERCOME THIS HANDICAP, BUT WITH HER PERSONAL SUCCESS IN "TO-DAY" HAS RAISED HERSELF VERY CLOSE TO STARDOM

From her latest photograph by Sarony, New York who had murdered the foreman and fixed the evidence responsible for the arrest of her husband. Which prompts Dorothy to stab Lou with a long, slim bread knife and bring the final curtain down on her neat but gory revenge.

SUFFERING SISTER BUCKLEY

In an artistically horrible little play called "The Kiss in the Dark," recently produced at the Princess Theater in New York, Mr. Harry Mestayer and Miss May Buckley play the leading rôles. She is a girl who once threw a bottle of vitriol in the face of Mr. Mestayer because, as her lover, he had threatened to leave her. The acid had blinded him. When the play begins she is being tried for the assault, and he, pretending to have forgiven her, is awaiting the verdict in his apartments. That the jury will acquit her he believes, because he has refused to appear against her or even submit an affidavit as to the facts.

The jury does acquit her, for lack of evidence, and out of gratitude she is drawn to a last meeting with the victim of her anger that she may thank him for his generosity. He receives her pleasantly, chides her gently for her thoughtlessness, and finally asks her to kiss him good-by. As she comes within reach of him he shrieks in glee at his diabolical revenge, pinions her arms to her sides and, holding her tightly, deliberately treats her as she had treated him, searing her own pretty eyes with the same acid.

The shocking brutality of this scene is received with audible shudders by the audience, and not a few of the women present invariably leave the theater not to return again—at least not that particular evening.

But the managers of the Princess frankly advertise their intention to shock or thrill their patrons, if that is possible, and thereby minimize the force of such criticism as their repertoire might inspire.

ESCAPING A HOUSE OF BONDAGE

But for downright misery commend me to the heroine of the short-lived "House of Bondage," which hesitated in New York just long enough to prove our contention of some months ago that Broadway is indeed through with the vice drama that has nothing better than the vice theme to sustain it. This young lady was not only lured from her Pennsylvania home, but the home itself was most unhappy even before the luring took place. She was brought to New York, sold into slavery and beaten into submission. When she escaped, "the system" drove her back into "the game," until, sick, penniless and repentant, she returned to her mother's house to seek shelter and forgiveness. But her mother, poor thing, could not keep her. The town was full of gossips and the father a hard man who would beat them both. So back to the city again tramped this luckless heroine to beg for her old position at the door of the house of bondage from which she once fled, only to be refused admittance there as well.

"The game's got you, my girl; you're through," is the final comment of the keeper of the resort. The last curtain leaves this little bundle of misery hugging to her sorry breast the one bit of revenge the play allows her. She has caused the arrest of the youth responsible for her misery, and expects him to get "ten years under the Mann act."

THE SYMPATHETIC EMPLOYER

The heroine of "Help Wanted" might be happy if she were given half a chance, but she isn't. She is sent out by an unsympathetic mother to find a position and she wanders into the office of a too sympathetic employer. The very first day she is there he insists upon taking her out to lunch and she has been warned that no stenographer should ever go to lunch with her employer.

To make matters worse the employer's stepson falls in love with her, and when the affair reaches its crisis, which it does the day the employer tries to kiss her, father and son are brought dramatically and belligerently face to face.

Father, angered out of all reason, puts the boy out of the firm and discharges the girl. And when the suffering heroine seeks her own home as a refuge she is soundly scolded by a too practical German mother for having lost a very good position over so trivial a thing as an employer's kiss.

When the girl casually remarks that the quarrel was precipitated by the young man, who wanted to marry her, her mother sends her tramping back to find the youth before his ardor cools. Being an obedient child she seeks her fiancé in his home, and there her ingenuousness, coupled with the boy's loyalty, wins forgiveness for them and shields her forevermore, we hope, from the annoyances of her father-in-law to be. Jack Lait, a Chicago newspaper man, is the author of this little play, which has had successful production in both Los Angeles and Chicago.

A FIGHTING DESDEMONA

Miss Cecilia Loftus's contribution to the unhappy heroines of the season was that of *Desdemona* in Mr. Faversham's revival of "Othello." And a most unhappy *Desdemona* did Miss Loftus present. Not only was she a frail young thing as compared with the burly *Othello* of R. D. MacLean, but her timorous and gentle voice fell with the pleading accents of a child in trouble, and as misery wrapped itself about her, and she approached the culminating tragedy of the concluding act, she grew more worried and more pathetic with each scene.

Unlike most *Desdemonas,* however, this little lady was not willing to give up the ghost at the first suggestion of her irate lord that she was about to be smothered. When he placed the pillow over her head, in place of dying without a struggle she arose in her excitement and fought back. She was on her knees in the center of the bed striving to push *Othello* away from her, and in her struggles he practically lifted her and turned her about until her head finally rested against the foot-board of the bed. She lay in this position outside the coverlets when the cruel murder was done.

It was the most realistic death struggle to which any *Desdemona* of our experience has submitted. But it is quite in keeping with the general tone of the Faversham revival. The actor-manager himself is the gentleman, as one wit expressed it, who puts the "go" in *Iago*. Not only is his own performance of this master of villainies completely in the modern style, but the entire production is spirited and interesting. Mr. Faversham made the old play a romantic melodrama, rather than a somber tragedy, and it was particularly well acted in all of its principal characters.

THE WIFE OF OMAR KHAYYAM

The young lady to whom, "Omar, The Tentmaker," fashioned his first quatrains —she of the loaf of bread, the jug of wine and the spreading bough in Richard Walton Tully's dramatization — is not the principal figure of this story of the Persian poet's life. But she is unhappy for all that. Guy Bates Post is the *Omar* and Jane Salisbury the lady in question.

It is during the riotous days of *Omar's* youth that they meet in the garden of her father, a teacher of the holy word of the prophet in Naishapur. *Shireen* is her name and the day following she is to become a member of the Shah's harem. Little wonder that she should elect to spend her last moonlit evening in the garden with Guy.

Her trouble really begins, however, after this prologue has been passed. The first act of the play is eighteen years later. *Omar* is still writing poetry and has become a very good two-handed wine bibber. *Shireen* is still a member of the harem, but sore beset with worries. She is the mother of a seventeen-year-old daughter. *Omar* is the girl's father, but doesn't know it, and there seems no way of bringing the family together. To tell the truth and shame the Shah would be to bring the authorities of Naishapur down upon the poet. So mother and daughter are obliged to stand aside while poor old *Omar* is jailed for his radical views on religion, and beaten for his temerity in explaining them.

It is while he is being bastinadoed that *Omar* sends his soul into the invisible, some letter of the after-life to spell. The effect of his soul's projection is gained by a dark change in which Mr. Post is raised bodily from the prison floor. He carries on his colloquy concerning the mysteries of the hereafter while suspended in mid-air.

There is happiness for the heroine, however, in the conclusion of "Omar." The Grand Vizier finally pardons the luckless poet and with his *Shireen* he goes back to the garden to spend his remaining years. Scenically it is the handsomest production of the year.

A FEW HAPPY HEROINES

Still, we must have contrast, and fortunately not all the heroines are sad. There is jolly Blanche Ring for instance who has been romping hither and thither about the country playing "When Claudia Smiles." The farce itself doesn't amount to much, but Miss Ring amounts to a great deal.

There are few young women on our stage who can sing popular songs with more engaging spirit than she, and there is none whose light-heartedness is more infectious. So long as she strives to please she can make almost any form of entertainment worth while. This is particularly true of her appearance in "When Claudia Smiles" which was once, in its musicless stage, "Vivian's Papas." Miss Ring appears as a wise Broadway show girl who knows her way about, and her most satisfactory scene is one in which she burlesques the life story of the professional Southern beauty of aristocratic lineage who is "fo'ced to desert the dear old So'th and come No'th" to earn her living.

The lady who is present to inject laughter into "The Laughing Husband" is also a happy sort of heroine. When sorrow threatens her, she breaks into song and usually it's a pleasing song, for "The Laughing Husband," Charles Frohman's second musical comedy of the year, ("The Marriage Market" having been the first) has many attractive numbers.

This heroine is played by Miss Betty Callish, and Miss Callish has been freely spoken of as a protégée of Sarah Bernhardt. She is a pretty soubrette, who both sings and plays the violin—pleasantly but neither with surpassing skill. As the wife of "The Laughing Husband," he being a rather prosaic sort and she a temperamental devotee of the arts, she becomes involved in a flirtation with a literary count, causing her husband to cease laughing at the second act finale long enough to tell her, melodiously but firmly, that he is through with her forever. In the last act they consult William Norris as a divorce attorney, and discover him to be an expert in reconciliations. Most divorces, he argues, are the result of trivial quarrels, and could easily be avoided if the interested parties could be kept away from their meddling friends. He therefore provides a "reconciliation parlor"—a room bathed in soft lights and provided with all known aids to the spirit of romance—and by locking his clients in there usually succeeds in reuniting them.

DIVORCED HEROINE HAPPY

Katherine Grey, as the heroine in "The Rule of Three," which is one of the newest of the divorce comedies, is happy because, having been married three times, she has successfully divorced the two husbands she least admired and finds herself content to live with No. 3. Her first was George Hassell, her second Orrin Johnson and her third Francis Byrne.

She is briefly worried, however, when she discovers that both her former mates are stopping in the same hotel with herself and her current husband. Nor is the situation made any clearer by her ten-year-old daughter, born of her first marriage, who insists on classifying the three as "father," "daddy," and "papa."

It is the lady herself, however, who causes the complications. Being a motherly soul she seeks to protect her former husbands from designing women and to arrange their second marriages to women of her selection, which causes husband No. 3 to become a bit jealous, not to say quite peevish. Then it appears there is some doubt as to whether or not the first divorce had been properly signed by the Reno judge who granted it, making it an open question as to which of her three husbands is legally entitled to regard himself as her prevailing lord and master. The conclusion is conventionally pleasant. The much married lady sticks to husband No. 3, while she succeeds in marrying off Nos. 1 and 2 to women she is willing to accept even though she may not thoroughly approve them.

THE PERSONS OF THE PICTURES

But enough of heroines, happy or unhappy. Let's to the picture gallery and catch them before the camera.

To the left of the title page, you will find José Collins, the English prima donna. Miss Collins spells her name with the acute "é," probably out of compliment to some Spanish ancestor, but no one ever thinks of calling her anything but "Josie." She did not come to America until two years ago, when the Shuberts imported her for the New York Winter Garden. In England she is, of course, well known. She made her début ten years ago in her mother's company, and mother you may recall as Lottie Collins, a divinity of the 'alls who rose to fame in a night as the result of a most effective boom—the boom that was featured by both the singer and the drummer in the orchestra in the song, "Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay!"

Following her début Miss José did a bit of everything there is for a singing soubrette to do in musical comedy, playing in London and touring the provinces. But

America has given her her best chance. Last season she was featured as the prima donna of " The Merry Countess," which was " Die Fledermaus " revised, and this season she became the prima donna of Mr. Ziegfeld's 1913 edition of " The Follies," a position she has held with entire satisfaction to her audiences.

VALLI VALLI AS A QUEEN

Not so many years ago Valli Valli, who usually eschews the prefix " Miss " in the cause of euphony and such distinction as her odd name gives her, was an ambitious little English actress, a dramatic soubrette with no idea of ever becoming a musical comedy star. She will tell you, should you ask her, that the best part she ever played was that of *Nello,* a boy, in a very serious drama entitled " The World Against Her."

But just as she was creating a place for herself as an actress George Edwardes, who has for so many years directed the Gaiety Theater in London, happened to see her playing. He needed a singing soubrette who also had had some dramatic training, and as soon as he discovered that Miss Valli could sing he offered her so generous a salary that she was won over to the Gaiety. She did not follow the Gaiety custom and marry into the English aristocracy, but she never went back to the drama. America knows her best for the part she played in popularizing " The Dollar Princess." A year ago she was the attractive heroine of " The Purple Road," which was too good to live, and this year she is playing the title-rôle in " The Queen of the Movies," the most successful of the musical plays with a moving picture background. Though her parents are English people, Valli Valli was born in Berlin, and she has two sisters, Ida and Lulu Valli, who are also on the stage. It may interest you to know she also sang *Sonia* in the Paris performance of " The Merry Widow."

Little Ina Claire, who came from just this side of Nowhere to make a name for herself in " The Quaker Girl " two years ago, has this winter been lending her attractively youthful presence and wee, small voice to " The Girl from Utah " in London, playing opposite Joseph Coyne, who has become English enough to drink tea for breakfast and wear a monocle, whether he has use for it or not. J. A. Malone, an Irishman with an American stage training, has for years staged Mr. Edwardes's musical comedies for him. When the late Henry B. Harris produced " The Quaker Girl " in this country he brought Mr. Malone over to put it on. And when Mr. Malone went back to London he carried with him a rather strong impression of Miss Claire's ability as a singing soubrette. Which explains how she happened to be sent for when " The Girl from Utah " was done.

VENITA FITZHUGH'S GOOD LUCK

Venita Fitzhugh, who began the season with Donald Brian in " The Marriage Market " and was later transferred to " The Laughing Husband," is a Western girl, St. Louis being the city of her nativity. Which may and may not account for her readiness to take advantage of any emergency calculated to advance her professionally. Ten days after she made her début with a company playing " The Kissing Girl " the leading woman fell suddenly ill. John Cort, the manager of the company, was afraid he would be forced to temporarily close the tour, when a small voice at his elbow whispered: " Let me play that part." He looked down upon Miss Venita, and smiled, pleasantly but incredulously.

" Do you know it?" he asked.

" No," she answered, truthfully. " But I can learn it."

And she did. She spoke more of her own lines than she did those of the author, but she got through. After that she was with " The Enchantress " for two seasons, and once more she filled a breach when Kittie Gordon, the star, could not sing. For nearly a week she substituted for the older prima donna during the run at the New York Theater. Miss Fitzhugh's mother, Ida Fitzhugh, has been on the stage for many years and it was under her chaperonage that the young woman made her début.

Evidently the English players, Frank Kemble Cooper and Violet Kemble Cooper, his very blond daughter, like America. They came over in the fall of 1912 to play important parts in " The Indiscretion of Truth," which did not last as long as expected. Since then Mr. Cooper has appeared in a number of productions, being prominently cast this year in support of John Drew. But Miss

Violet has not been so fortunate. Last season she played several stock company engagements in Shakespearian revivals and understudied Blanche Bates while that actress was touring the West in "The Witness for the Defense." This season she succeeded Christine Norman in the "Peg O' My Heart" company, supporting Laurette Taylor. In New York, by the way, "Peg" is well past her 500th performance, and will continue until late spring, when Miss Taylor plans to sail for Europe for the first holiday she has had in two years.

If Henry B. Harris had lived, he would have given Miss Elsie Ferguson a chance to play Juliet. She was, he contended, the one American actress preeminently suited to a modern revival of the love tragedy. His death on the Titanic undoubtedly halted Miss Ferguson's career, but this season she overcame the handicap, and scored a distinct personal success in William Hurlbut's "The Strange Woman." Now she is to have a second chance as the heroine of "The Unseen Empire."

Miss Emily Stevens's stage career has embraced a series of fortunate and unfortunate experiences. Because as a beginner she somewhat resembled her aunt, Mrs. Fiske, in both method and manner, she was accused of deliberately imitating that actress. Later, although she personally scored a decided success on Broadway in "Septimus," with George Arliss, the play failed. A few seasons later, when she was given a chance that Grace George refused, to play the heroine in "Within the Law," that now popular melodrama proved a very uncertain success in Chicago. As a result Miss Stevens decided she was not eager to play the part on Broadway. It fell to Miss Jane Cowl who scored the success of her professional career in it.

This season Miss Stevens has again been both fortunate and unfortunate. She was assigned to the rôle of the heroine in "To-Day," which proved to be an unexpected financial success. But the part of the sinning wife she has been forced to play is most unsympathetic and has done little to advance her popularity with the public. Still she does not despair. Next season the Liebler Company is to send her out in a play they have been holding for her, and this may prove the exact opportunity for which she has been waiting.

Miss Jane Cowl may thank the opportunity that came to her in "Within the Law" for having raised her to a position of such prominence among the younger leading women of America that, 'tis said, she commands a weekly salary of $600. New York managers are willing and even eager to pay her this sum, because they know she will draw several times that amount to the box-office, which is the final and supreme test of dramatic art in this country. Last winter Miss Cowl and Miss Laurette Taylor shared the honor of being the society favorites of the season. Nightly the lines of carriages, taxis and automobiles that blocked the streets in front of the Eltinge and Cort Theaters were the dismay of the traffic squad, and the number of invitations to society affairs these young women refused would fill the note-books of a society reporter.

THE LUMINARY OF "THE MIDNIGHT GIRL"

There is much—and little—in a stage name. Consider, for example, the Tout sisters, Hazel and Maggie, of Ogden, Utah. Both musical young women and each with an unusual success to her credit. And yet probably not over a hundred people in America would recognize them as Hazel Dawn and Margaret Romaine. Any more than Maude Kiskadden of Salt Lake City could take the place of the adorable Maude Adams, or Ethel Blythe, daughter of Herbert Blythe, could command the attention that is given Ethel Barrymore, daughter of Maurice Barrymore, though they are one and the same.

I mention this fact, because it was brought to mind recently by the almost sensational success of Miss Romaine. In New York all that was known of her before she made her début in "The Midnight Girl" was that she was a sister of Hazel Dawn, a featured member of "The Pink Lady" company three years ago. Yet before twenty-four hours had passed, following her first appearance, she was the talk of theatrical circles, and Margaret Romaine had become a name to be honored among the light opera prime donne of America.

It does not often happen this way, particularly with handicaps such as Miss Romaine faced. True, she had had some experience singing in opera in Paris, where she has been studying, but she was not only making her first appearance in America among strangers, but she was also singing in a cast of popular favorites.

Opposite her was the stalwart and commanding barytone, George MacFarlane, who, because of the poise and confidence that his exceptional barytone voice and many successes have given him, has a way of over-shadowing the prima donna with whom he sings. But in this instance Miss Romaine not only accepted the implied challenge, but rose to it as only one of unusual gifts of voice and talent could have done.

As for " The Midnight Girl," it is, in story, the usual musical play from French sources. Three indiscreet Frenchmen—gay dogs, of course—become involved in certain amatory affairs. They bear the same surname, and as one of them is a French senator, and distinguished, each of the others claims his identity. When the three of them register at the same honeymoon hotel in the Pyrenees there are certain obvious complications which it requires a considerable amount of comedy and song to straighten out. It is a more tuneful musical show than the average and seems likely to prove popular.

A MIDDLE CLASS CLASSIC

And as though to prove true the adage, " It never rains, but it pours," the same week that Margaret Romaine rose from practical obscurity to a position of prominence in a night, Frank Craven, the comedian who had more to do with the success of George Broadhurst's " Bought And Paid For " than any other one feature of the performance, produced a little comedy of his own entitled " Too Many Cooks " and scored with it the success of the late season in New York.

It must be rather a fine sensation to go to bed one night a worried actor on salary and wake up next morning an all but famous playwright and star. That was Craven's experience.

" Too Many Cooks " owes its success to an assortment of simple virtues. It is clean, direct, human and true; a plain story of plain people settling their middle class problems in a middle class way, and doing it most amusingly.

Craven himself appears as an average clean-minded, whole-hearted, keen-witted youth who has determined to marry and settle down. He has taken his savings and started building a modest six-room cottage within commuting distance of New York. His fiancée is a pretty little stenographer whom he met in a dairy lunch room. He has followed the usual custom of calling on Sunday evening and has taken her to the theater when he could afford it. He has met her father and mother, and understands vaguely that there is a sister and a brother or two. But when she refers casually to her " folks " he thinks she means only her parents. Then, suddenly, after the engagement is announced and the foundations for the little cottage in the country have been laid, the bride-to-be invites her relatives to go with her and inspect her new home.

Then Craven discovers there are, indeed, too many Cooks! Ten of them! Sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles and cousins, and rather a drab and uninteresting lot. But it is not their number that causes the trouble. It is their perfectly natural, though irritating, way of making suggestions as to how the house shall be built and furnished and partitioned.

Comes also Craven's uncle, by whom he is employed, who likewise has a few suggestions to make. Among them one that *he* should occupy the spare room and give the young people the benefit of *his* advice. All this leads to a quarrel and a broken engagement. The ring is returned, the marriage declared off and the love dream shattered, while in the midst of the tragedy the carpenters at work on the cottage go on strike.

The conclusion, of course, is a happy one, as it should be in so delightfully pleasant a little comedy. And it is not forced. With the help of the neighbors Craven finishes his cottage and plants the rose bushes and fixes the lawn just as he and his sweetheart had thought they would do. The last act sees the little home completed, but with a huge " For Sale " sign as its most prominent decoration.

Then, through the conniving, but without the actual assistance, of any of the relatives the young people are brought together. There is a complete understanding as to the ways in which interfering relatives should be treated, and a passing hand-organ man is heard grinding out the strains of " Home, Sweet Home " as the final curtain leaves the happy home builders seated on their own front porch. There was good excuse for the enthusiasm with which the New York reviewers received " Too Many Cooks " and its clever author-star.

THE SHOP

BOB DAVIS, of whom I told you something in our February number, has just made a flying trip abroad and bagged a dozen novels. Here are some of the authors with whom he has closed contracts for full book length novels for publication in THE MUNSEY or some of our other magazines:

ARNOLD BENNETT
ANTHONY HOPE
A. E. W. MASON
AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE
JOSEPH CONRAD
G. K. CHESTERTON
BEATRICE HARRADEN
S. R. CROCKETT
E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
BARONESS ORCZY
MAURICE DRAKE
C. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON

This is going some, all these contracts in three weeks and now, as I write, Bob Davis is crossing the blue again homeward bound. But while Davis has been hobnobbing with the English litterateurs, the home office has been active in this field as well, placing contracts with American and other authors.

* * * * *

The man who finds time dragging should get an editorial job on some monthly magazine. He would never find himself burdened again with time.

Merciful heavens, how the months come thundering in, one hot on the heels of the other! If the days were ten times their usual length the conscientious magazine editor could not finish his work to his satisfaction.

The magazine, unlike the daily newspaper, is not a necessity. Luxury, that it is, it must be good, or the public won't buy it. To make a magazine that sells on its merits, a magazine for which there is a spontaneous demand in these days of big Sunday papers, keeps one guessing all the while and working all the while.

The magazine of nation wide circulation is so restricted in the scope of its topics that in this respect it has about one chance to a thousand with the daily newspaper.

The latter is a good deal of a machine, a part of our daily life. It mirrors the happenings of a day, the world over, covers the markets, the weather, amusements, marriages, deaths, shipping and other doings and incidents.

All these either come into the newspaper office in regular routine over the wires or are gathered up by the local staff. Then the editorials, and the day's issue is complete. Easy? No, not by any means easy, but compared with magazine making it is a dead straight cinch.

The magazine isn't timely. It cannot carry a scrap of news. News is news, fresh in the happening. A day old, and it is history, so the magazine can't touch it except it can it, and there is no demand for canned news.

The strong pull with a daily newspaper is its local news. The magazine can't get a look in on this. It has no local field. Its field is the world and the world is entirely preempted by daily newspapers.

If a magazine prints an article on politics or religion, it comes in for a roasting. If it criticises the government, public men or measures, railroads or institutions it is a muckraker. If it says something that has a punch to it it is undignified, unmagazine like; if it has no punch, it is deadly dull, and so it goes.

Difficult as it is to get good fiction and plenty of it it is far more difficult to get live, worthwhile articles suited to magazine publication—articles susceptible of illustration and such as would most likely command a reading in all sections of the country and command a reading by both men and women.

Fiction in the very nature of it has a wider appeal. It is the play in the home, and we all like the play. The demand for fiction, however, is so keen that to get the best and in the quantities we require it in this shop, is a big job in itself.

* * * * *

We have been mighty busy here the last four or five months, dynamiting conventionality out of this shop. Conventionality gets nowhere. It clogs imagination and is a brake on enterprise. Conventionality is incessant and insidious in its work, and its work is an easy job. It is a do-nothing job and a screaming protest against the do-somethings of life.

The common sense of a new idea or the new application of an old idea is all wrong in the eyes of conventionality. Conventionality and reactionaryism are twin brothers—reactionaryism in business, in government, in religion, in education, in art, in everything. I am inclined to think, though, that they are about one and the same thing—reactionaryism being merely an alias for conventionality.

In the very outset of its career MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE got into a row with conventionality and in those early days put up some vigorous fights, but with increasing age and increasing prosperity, and with intermittent spasms leaning towards highbrowism, conventionality stealthily got in its work with us, as it gets in its work everywhere unless clubbed into submission.

Conventionality is like barnacles that attach themselves to a ship, slowing down its speed and making progress difficult. It is this conventionality that we have been chiseling and crowbaring and dynamiting out of the shop. Its deep incrustation has been smashed into smithereens, and now we are having real fun, doing things as we like and as free mortals.

* * * * *

What I am saying about conventionality must not be taken as a reflection on the staff that produced THE MUNSEY prior to the last few months. I myself have been primarily responsible for the magazine all the while, but working through others and turning the work off on others, I did not and could not get so close to it as I am now. Moreover, a man representing another cannot do stunts and take chances with that other man's property as he can with his own. The owner of a periodical can experiment to his heart's content, and if he makes mistakes it is nobody's business, as it means a loss to no one except himself.

One thing on which we have been waging war is the conventional "article" of conventional length. Give a writer a subject and tell him you want an "article" on it, and straightway that subject, however slight-waisted, takes shape in the professional writer's mind in figures of three thousand or five thousand words. Tell him to cover that same idea in an editorial, and he will see it in concrete shape and square his work accordingly, with the result that ten chances to one his production will be worth while.

Now we are trying to get away from all these stilted length articles. Article writers for the most part seem to think in three thousand and five thousand words. In THE MUNSEY MAGAZINE of to-day we are allotting to an idea as near as possible the space it requires for its best presentation, be that space half a page, a page, or forty pages. The troublesome thing is to know what to do with the short "articles" of quarter, half, or full magazine page length. We have been trying to hit upon a method of presentation for these brieflets, articlettes, or what not—some general head, perhaps, that will cover them.

The point is this—there should not be a word of waste space given to an idea and there should not be a waste word inflicted on the reader. The system of buying manuscripts at so much a word, which has become more or less general, is the worst thing that ever happened to magazine making. Fancy a poet writing a poem in the meter of the coin of the realm, or an essayist writing to the chink of gold! Few men can do the best work there is in them conscious of the dollar-sign stamped on the multiplying pages.

* * * * *

We have finished with buying manuscripts by girth. Merit alone will determine their value to us. And we are getting a good line on the merit of manuscripts, a better line than ever before. This is how we manage it:

We make a copy of the first page of a manuscript, leaving off the author's name, and substitute it for the original page bearing his name. Thus the readers of the manuscript have no idea who wrote it and consequently are not influenced by the name of the author.

It would surprise you to find from their reports how well many of the unknown writers measure up with those of towering fame. The fact is that the work of authors varies greatly. And yet it is difficult to convince the reading public that anything from the pen of an unknown writer can be as good as, or in any sense comparable with, that of the men who have established reputations. People are consciously or unconsciously influenced by big names. It is because of this fact that we worked out the plan of eliminating the names of the authors from manuscripts before they go into the hands of our staff readers.

* * * * *

It may interest you likewise to know how we fix upon the price for different novels. Our way of arriving at their value is perhaps peculiar to ourselves. This is how we work it out:

A full book length novel of first-rate merit by an unknown name is worth a given price for publication complete in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. Another story of no more merit might be worth to us ten or even twenty times as much—the difference being wholly in the commercial value of the author's name.

Of course, some unknown author might submit a story bulging with genius. For such a story we should pay a good deal more than for the story of an unknown writer which is merely a first-rate piece of work. But the genius novel doesn't come along very frequently, and when it does it is more apt to be the product of a trained pen, behind which stands the man of inherent genius, than of the novice. And coming from the trained pen which has made a reputation, it would command a big price.

While we prefer stories of real merit by unknown authors to those of indifferent merit by the literary giants, nevertheless the works of known men have a very decided value to us in that they introduce the magazine to a wider circle of readers. I don't believe they have so much influence with our regular readers, who have come to rely upon the editors of THE MUNSEY to give them something worth while in every number. The difference in price, and sometimes it is a very vast difference, between the cost of novels of known and unknown authors should properly be charged up to the circulation department rather than to the editorial department, and though we do not as a matter of fact keep our books quite in this way, it is really what it amounts to.

For example, a novel might cost as much as forty thousand dollars from some very great writer while the intrinsic value of the story itself would not be over five thousand dollars, the difference of thirty-five thousand being the commercial value of his name.

* * * * *

In a former issue of THE MUNSEY I said something about the advantage to the new man of magazine publication for his novel over that of book publication, urging that in the magazine he would get a wide reading, whereas in book form he might not command much of an audience.

When it is known to the readers of a magazine, as I want it to be known to you, the readers of THE MUNSEY, that everything we print gets into the magazine on its merit, and for no other reason, the man of little or no reputation will come in for a wide reading, and a wide reading is what he wants. One or two first-rate books put before so big an audience as THE MUNSEY can give him, and his reputation is made, his place in the literary world fixed, and his fortune assured.

With the ready sale and big prices for fiction I wonder that thousands of men and women don't take up writing who are now devoting their lives to other fields of endeavor—many of them to less attractive and less remunerative fields, I am sure.

After all, writing is a trade, quite as much so as that of cabinet making. Genius is another matter, but there are few geniuses. Mechanics differ in skill and touch in all trades, and so with the mechanics of the pen. Many writers would have made better bricklayers, and many bricklayers would have made better writers. Quality of writing depends largely on temperament, feeling, imagination, analysis, the scope of experience, the knowledge chiseled out of life; training gives a man the trade, nothing more.

FRANK A. MUNSEY

THE PLANS

BY OWEN OLIVER

THE little general was pacing his office like a tethered hound, when the gaunt old chief of staff came in.

"There is news of the rebels' attack on Manos," he said.

"We knew they were beaten off," the general growled.

"Yes, they were beaten off; but they burned down the East Tower first. Most of the provisions were stored there. I don't suppose the garrison has enough left to last a week."

The general muttered to himself; tugged at his long mustache.

"How did the news come?" he asked.

"The American scout fellow brought it—Lieutenant Cartero."

"Carter," the general corrected. The chief of staff could never get foreign names right.

"He's been hanging round the rebels' outposts for two days, hiding behind bushes, and in a pool up to his neck. He heard a picket talking. They've shot two messengers from the president."

"And four of ours!"

"And when one got through, they ambushed the relief party. There's a traitor in the council."

"Well, I don't tell the council my plans now. Plans! They aren't worth calling plans. If we had the president here, he'd make a plan to stop the rebellion in a week. I was wondering if I could get him out at the cost of half the army; and whether even the president is clever enough to win with the other half."

"His excellency the president would be clever enough for anything, if he were not so foolishly merciful! But we can't get him out at the cost of the whole army. At least *I* can't see any way."

"Umph! The fact is you and I are only rough fighting soldiers, Manuel. Heavens! If only we had an officer who could make a real plan!"

"The American wants to speak to you. Perhaps he has one."

The general laughed bitterly.

"He's a backwoodsman, not a soldier! I'm not going to waste my time on *his* plans. Pat him on the back, and tell him to put on his best clothes and go and see Estelle Lareste."

The old man laughed.

"He's put on his new uniform," the chief of staff said; "but it's to see you. You'd better pat the boy yourself. He's useful."

"Send him in, then."

The chief of staff went out, and the general resumed his restless pacing and the tugging at his long mustache.

"If somebody could think of a plan!" he muttered; and the orderly announced Lieutenant Carter.

"If you want a messenger to Manos, sir," he began; and the general swept the proposal aside with his arm.

"I've sent four," he snapped. "They are feeding the crows. Some traitor betrayed them, most likely; for they were good men, and there was a chance of getting through then. Now there is none. If there were, I'd let you risk your life. It's what lives are for! There isn't. No, lieutenant. The rebels have spread right across the country now. They would take you, and my plans."

The tall young officer leaned down toward the little general.

"It wouldn't matter," he said softly, "if the plans were false ones!"

"But—" the general began; and stopped.

"If you wrote that you meant to force the North Pass, sir? They would mass there; and then you could go south. It's open country, except the hills and the wood by the creek. You would relieve Manos that way."

The general drew two deep breaths.

"And you would lie in six feet of earth!" he said.

"I would do that for the president," Carter declared. "Sir, I owe a life to him; and I've got to pay. He made a man of me when— But you know the president."

"Yes, yes. If my old life would save him— But you are a young man. You propose to let them take you?"

"Yes, sir."

The general did not answer for some seconds. His mind had made a curious excursion off the main track. After the war, they would set up a marble statue to this young foreigner in the market square, he was thinking.

"I wish I had a son to do this for his country," he said. "You have not spoken of your plan to any one?"

"No, sir."

"Keep silence. I shall show no one the letter, and tell no one that the plan is false; not even the council. If you lose your life, you will have done more with it than most men. I—I wish you were my son! I honor you, Lieutenant Carter. Be prepared to start at eight."

The lieutenant saluted and went. The general rang for his aide-de-camp.

"Summon the council at six," he commanded. "Don't let me be disturbed for the next half-hour. I am making a plan!"

II

Estelle Lareste was lying on the sofa reading when her father, the treasurer, returned from the council meeting. At least he found her reading. A moment before he entered, she had been staring at the portrait of a young man in uniform; a young man who was safely back from a scouting expedition, she had heard.

The treasurer—a large, dreamy-looking man — stood beside her and patted her head. He was a widower, and she was his only child; a very beautiful girl, and a woman at eighteen, as maids with Spanish blood are.

"Well, Estelle," he said slowly. "He is back again, as I see that you know. The pitcher goes to the well once too often, remember. The society is impatient with me for sparing him. The general is going to send another messenger to Manos."

The girl sat up and clung to his arm.

"Oh, father! Another to die! It seems so cruel! Why cannot you settle it as they do in America, Maurice — I mean Lieutenant Carter—says? They have a—I do not remember what the name is. They call one another dreadful names and tell lies, but they do not fight!"

"Ah!" said her father. "But once they fought! There are some things that talking cannot settle, Estelle. Blood must be spilled before this country is free."

The girl shuddered.

"Is it some one I know, father? The messenger? Why do you look like that?"

"It is Lieutenant Carter," he owned. "He volunteered to the general; and the general recommended him to the council. I tried to stop them sending him, but they would not listen to me. I told them that he was a fool; but they answered that no one but a fool would go. The society will not spare him this time. He *is* a fool. He sees no danger. That is why he is dangerous."

"But you will not tell the society, father? I am your only child. He is so much to your little Estelle. So very much, father! You will not tell the society?"

"Our country's liberty is at stake, Estelle. He must not be allowed to reach the president. Once he was with the army, all would be over with the party of freedom."

"But the president is not a bad man, father."

"No. His fault is that he is good—too good for this country in its present state! I must tell the society about Carter's mission, my child. I would do it if he were my own son! I will tell them to take him alive, if they can."

"He will not be taken alive. He is so brave; so foolishly brave! Father, I am your little girl—the only one! We always loved each other so. Father, dear, you are so clever—can't you find out the plan some other way?"

"No. I cannot, Estelle. *Can you?*"

The girl stared up at him. Her dark eyes looked enormous in her pale face.

"If we had learned the contents of the letter that he carries," Lareste said, "then the society would let him pass unharmed. He is coming to say farewell to you tonight. He asked me, and I said that he might. He is young and foolish. Has he said that he loves you?"

"No. Not yet. Will the general tell Maurice the plan that he conceals from the council? From you?"

" No, no. He will not know what is in the letter. It is in a blank, square envelope. The general sealed it before us with the council's seal."

" Maurice would not open it—not for his life; not even for mine!"

" You would be no wiser if he did. It is sure to be in cipher. We have copies of that, and I keep the seal!"

" Father? What do you mean?"

" I could give you a letter indistinguishable from it. If he trusted his letter in your hands?"

" If! But Maurice is so—so trusting—of me! To betray him—"

" To save his life!"

The girl wrung her hands.

" His life! I would not cheat him for all the world else. What will you put in your letter, father?"

Lareste waved his hand impatiently.

" You are too young to understand policy, Estelle," he protested. " I shall write something that will put the enemy in our hands, with as little bloodshed as possible; that will end civic war; that will save this country of ours, and give its people freedom. Would you do nothing for that, Estelle? Do you not say the prayer that I taught you to lisp for your country? Do you not—"

" Oh!" she cried. " I would not do it for my country; not for prayers; not for you! It is for his life, if I do this wicked thing. Father, is there no honorable way? No other way at all to save him?"

" I will tell them to take him alive, if they can," her father promised slowly; " but they are bitter against him. Yesterday there was some shooting between him and a picket, and two of our men—I think they would tell me they could not take him alive. That is why I— You have dropped a portrait from your book, my dear. I noticed it there yesterday. It is for you that I want to save him, little daughter."

" Ah!" she cried. " You cannot do that —nor I. I shall save him only for himself—for another woman. Ah-h-h-h!" She screamed wildly. " He will hate me ever after; he will love some one else. But I can't let him die! I can't let him die!"

" He will love you again," her father assured her, " even if he hates you for a while. There was a time when your mother and I— She was a lovely creature, Estelle; it was not possible to help loving her. God rest her! She gave love for love! I shall tell him how you have saved his life twice through me. It will be three times; for I shall make them spare him when we have conquered. We must conquer, Estelle. Heaven is on the side of the right, in the end, though sometimes it delays a long while. He will love you more for doing it, little one."

" Ah, no! Ah, no! He will say that his wife must love first his honor, not his life. But he shall not die. I—I—oh, why didn't I die with my mother?"

III

Lieutenant Carter found Señorita Estelle Lareste alone in her father's drawing-room. They held hands and looked in each other's eyes. She gave a little sob, and his mouth twitched.

" So you are a hero," she said, with a tear running down each cheek. " They will put a marble statue of you in the great square, the general says, if you die. And what will they put in your friend's heart, Señor Maurice?"

" The remembrance that your friend did his duty, *señorita*. A month ago it would have been easier to go. Now— Since I may not come back, and since I love you greatly, may I kiss you once, Estelle?"

" Since you may not come back — and even though you may!— You may kiss me, Maurice. Ah!"

The girl clung round his neck, and they kissed many times.

" If they should take you!" she wailed. " If they should take you! The society—I mean the rebels!"

If Estelle's head had not been buried on the lieutenant's shoulder she would have seen his eyebrows rise when she spoke of the society. He came of a cleverer people than she, and he knew that the mind speaks truest at first thought. In his scouting he had found no surer test of the country people than this—that the disloyal thought of the rebels as the Society of Freedom.

" If the rebels should take me," he repeated, and shrugged his shoulders.

" They will find the—what you carry."

" Why, yes," he agreed. " They will find it. Of course!"

" But you conceal it, do you not?"

Again his eyebrows lifted.

" Why, no! What is the use? They would find it, anyhow."

" Where do you carry it?" she asked; and looked innocently up in his face.

His eyebrows and his features were still enough then. He wondered if his fingers had twitched on her warm shoulders.

"In my breast pocket, little Lady Eve," he answered, smiling as if her curiosity amused him.

"Next to your heart — which is my heart?"

"I carry a little picture of you there, my very dear lady. The letter is in the pocket on the other side."

He laughed and tapped it. She pressed on his tunic with her slender fingers.

"But it is small! It hardly crackles at all, Maurice! You should sew it in the lining. Then perhaps they would not find it. Men's fingers are so clumsy! Let me sew it in for you, dear. It would be safer then. I am sure, dear! It would make me easier, Maurice. When you are gone I shall cry! Let me sew it in. My work-basket is here. I am industrious, you see!"

"You must be a very industrious little lady to keep your work-basket in the drawing-room!"

He plunged his hand into the basket, but she snatched it away from him hastily.

"No, no!" she cried. "You must not meddle with that. I keep all my secrets there. Some day, perhaps—why, you look ill, Maurice!"

"I found the point of a needle," he said, and pretended to wipe his finger; but the wound was not there, only in his heart. He had felt a waxen seal underneath the wool!

"Oh, Maurice! Has it hurt you? Show me!"

"No, no! It's all right. It isn't the needle-point that hurts, Estelle. I am saying good-by to you; and perhaps it is for a long time."

"Oh, don't! Don't! I do so love you! Let me sew the letter in, just to give you one little chance more of safety! If it is ever so useless, it will comfort me to have done one little service for—for my dear lover! My fingers want to work for you! And — perhaps — they — might never — again!"

She sobbed suddenly. He held her close to him with one arm. With the other he took the letter from his pocket and held it behind her. His thumb-nail marked one corner slightly. He noted that a tiny spur of red wax jutted out on the right-hand side of the round impress; a very tiny spur.

"The little fingers shall work for me!" he assented. He took her hands and kissed the fingers one by one. "I will unbutton my tunic, and you shall make a slit in the lining, and I will put this letter in; and you shall sew it there with the little hands that work for my life—and my honor."

The girl put her hands on the table as if she steadied herself. Her lips moved before she spoke.

"A man is so foolish!" she said, as if she tried to laugh. "It must not be a gash that they could see, Maurice. I must unpick the lining at a seam, and sew it up very neatly. You must take off your tunic for that. The time is so short, Maurice. Take it off! Shall I hold the letter?"

"That must not leave my hands," he protested.

"But my hands are your hands!" she told him prettily.

He looked in her eyes; took her hands; placed the letter in them; kissed them. Then he unbuttoned his tunic rapidly; turned from her, as he drew it off, for perhaps five seconds. The letter was changed in two. He held out the tunic and she held out the other letter—the one which her father had prepared.

"An exchange," he said lightly.

He did not even glance at the letter then; but while she was working at the seam, with her head bent over it, he turned the envelope over in his hand; noted that there was no thumb-nail mark on the corner, and no little spur jutting out from the round of the seal.

It was well that her eyes were not on him at that instant. When she smiled up at him between the stitches, his lips were moving unsteadily.

"Little loved hands," he said, as if he excused his emotion. "Little loved hands that work for my life"—she smiled and nodded—"and my honor."

She dropped her head again. He stood looking down at her and smiled. Well, he thought that he smiled.

"Now you can put it in," she said presently.

He placed the letter in the opening and she began to sew it in.

"Some day you will thank me," she declared. "If you come back to me. Oh, Maurice! You surely will?"

"If I never come to thank you," he repeated slowly, "God pays the debts of the dead! Whether I come back or not, He will requite you for to-night's work, Estelle."

She said nothing. A tear fell on the tunic. She wiped it off with her little lace handkerchief.

"It is finished," she announced presently. She rose and helped him to put his arms into the tight-fitting sleeves; buttoned the tunic for him. "Ah, Maurice!" she cried. "Anyhow, I shall have worked for your dear life!"

"Life is dear," he told her; "but there are dearer things."

"Love! Oh, Maurice!"

She put her hands on his shoulders, and held up her tear-stained face to him.

"Love!" he echoed. "Oh, Estelle!" His eyes were wet. She wiped them with the little handkerchief. He kissed her. "Love — and honor!" It was she who kissed him then. "Good-by. God guard you!"

She screamed with anguish.

"God guard you!" she prayed, clasping her hands. "God guard you. I love you so!"

He kissed her again and strode to the door. He turned there. She rocked to and fro as she stood by the table. One hand was on her heart; the other lay on the work-basket. He looked at that hand; waited for what seemed a long time; drew his breath through his teeth as she brought it away—empty!

"Oh, Maurice!" she cried. "If you never come back to me!"

He opened the door.

"God pays the debts of the dead!" he said again. "Farewell!"

In the passage he reeled like a drunken man.

IV

The little general paced and paced his office, pulling and pulling at his long mustache. In five minutes he must go out and see Lieutenant Carter start off to his death. He struggled against a twitching of his fierce old mouth, walked to the mirror over the fireplace to see that he looked sufficiently stiff and stern.

In the glass he saw the door open, and Carter enter. He never knew what made him turn so quickly.

"Carter?" he inquired.

The lieutenant stood with his arm hanging by his side, forgetting to salute.

"Sir," he said in a voice that sounded old, "the plans are safely delivered into the hands of the enemy!"

"You mean—" the general gasped. "You mean—"

"They have changed the letter. They do not know that I know."

"They? Who?"

"I cannot tell you that, sir."

"Cannot — tell — me!" The general grasped his arm. "Cannot? Or will not?"

"Will not, sir."

"Will not tell me of traitors within these walls! I command you, Carter." The lieutenant made no answer. "You know the penalty of refusal?"

"Yes, sir. I have no care for my life now. I do not plead for that; but if I do not ride out to-night, they will know that I detected the exchange; and our plan will fail."

The general released Carter's arm and prowled across the little room again.

"You have the substituted letter, I suppose?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

Carter opened his tunic, ripped a seam with his penknife, and held out the letter. The general turned it over and over.

"I see no difference," he remarked. "You saw it exchanged?"

"No, sir. I had marked the corner of the other envelope with my thumb-nail; and there was a slight flaw in the impression of the seal. This is perfect."

"You suspected that an attempt would be made to exchange it?"

"I suspected a moment before. I made the mark then."

"And you allowed the letter to be taken? You had your sword and revolver!"

"I judged it better to let them think that I carried their plans. Then they would let me pass—with whatever message you chose to give. You can trust my loyalty, since I have brought this to you."

The general laughed bitterly.

"You are a clever man!" he cried. "A clever man! On your own confession you are in close touch with the traitors. If *I* were a clever man, instead of a loyal, fighting old fool! If I were a clever man, Lieutenant Carter, I should say this—you gain my confidence by offering to carry a false plan. A false plan is no use to your friends; so you try to get a true one from me."

"Sir," Carter pleaded, "I did not ask

you whether you would put in a true or a false plan. If you choose, I will carry theirs; carry it through, if I am allowed, if you wish; throw myself into their hands if you order that. If you think me clever, as you say, will you consider this?—if I am a traitor, you are no worse off than if I had never told you my plan. If I am true to his excellency—before Heaven, I am! — I can enable you to deceive the enemy and rescue him. I am in your hands. What will you do?"

The general sat down to his desk, opened the letter, and took up his cipher book.

"If you are false," he observed coldly, "you know what they have written. It is best that you should know if you are true. This is their message in my name:

> "I come in force by the South Road, starting at midnight to-morrow. Start about one to meet me by the river at two. Bring all ammunition, transport, and stores, evacuating Manos and returning with me to the city.

"Very well. Carry their plan. If you are a true man, tell the president that they know it, and he must be prepared for an ambush by the river. Tell him that I know it and have made *my* plan."

"Yes, sir. May I venture to make a suggestion?"

"No!" cried the general furiously. "No! I am aware that you are cleverer than I. Mine is a fool's plan! But it's hard to guess a fool's mind! That is *my* chance!"

He put the letter in a fresh envelope, closed this, and scribbled his initials across the flap.

"The treasurer has the seal," he remarked, "and I won't tell even him. Good night, Carter. God speed you—if you are a true man!"

"Sir," the lieutenant said, "on my honor, and on the honor of my country, I am true. Good night!"

The general paced the room once more, fuming like a caged lion, when Carter was gone.

"The treasurer keeps the seal!" he muttered; "and Carter loves Estelle Lareste; and a woman sewed that seam! *I* will make a plan. I used to call her my little sweetheart; and she ought to hang! Carlos! Carlos!"

His young aide-de-camp came quickly.

"Send for the chief of staff," the general ordered; and paced and paced till the grim old officer appeared.

"There are traitors within these walls," the general said. "It is not enough to set guards to examine those who come in. Give orders that no one is to go out—no one whatever, and on no pretext whatever. It is sure to leak out that we are preparing for a march to-morrow. Keep the leakage inside the city."

"Very good," the chief of staff assented. "I will double the guards, and order them to shoot if any one breaks out."

"There is another thing," the general continued, playing with his great mustache. "Things will leak out within the city; but we can reduce the leakage. We must seem to be gay and careless, and give the women something to chatter about besides the movements of the army. I will have a dinner party to-morrow night; the council and the military heads of departments and all their grown-up families. The women will be too busy looking out their clothes to chatter to-morrow. We can break up at eleven, and start off when they think we are going to bed. Eh?"

"Yes," the chief of staff approved. "It may stop some of the chattering. A woman's tongue is never *quite* stopped. Anyhow, it will stop some of the worrying, by occupying their minds. Anything else?"

"No, I don't think so. Oh! By the way, you must make quite sure that Lareste brings little Estelle. I want to toast Carter and her! Some girls would have kept their lover back, but our Estelle is—her father's daughter! I used to call her my little sweetheart, when she was a baby. Tell her that, and say that she must come. Good night!"

And once more the old general was alone, pacing the room. Now he walked slowly, with his head bowed down.

"I called her my little sweetheart," he muttered. "And I've put a proclamation on every wall that any traitor, man or woman, found betraying us to the rebels shall hang!"

V

THEY were brave ladies and gentlemen at the general's dinner-party, and they tried bravely to be merry; but they threw off their mask of smiles when the general tapped on the drawing-room mantelpiece to command attention, just after eleven o'clock.

"It is no use pretending," he said, "that you do not know that our president and our friends are starving in Manos; and that we are making a desperate attempt to relieve him to-night. It is time that those who go and those who stay should know my plans. I have not told them before, for a good reason. There are traitors in this city—perhaps in this room — who betray our intentions to the rebels. Next to relieving Manos, my dearest wish—the dearest wish of most of you — is to hang the traitors on these walls. I shall hang one of them before I start to-night!"

There was a roar like the roar of angry lions and lionesses. Dignified men shook their fists and showed their teeth. Gracious ladies hissed and clenched their jeweled hands.

"I march out with a changed plan," the general said, "for I find that a traitor has betrayed the one I made yesterday. There are true men serving us in the ranks of the enemy, as there are false men serving among us. Our good friends have seized our betrayer and brought him to me. The guards upon the ramparts have him at the foot of the gallows. He hangs there when we start to-night!"

Again the ladies and gentlemen forgot their veneer of civilization.

"Traitor!" they yelled. "Traitor! Hang him! Hang, hang, hang!"

The women screamed the loudest. They had fathers, brothers, husbands, lovers, starving in Manos.

"Who is he?" a gentle-looking, fair-haired woman shrieked. "Let me curse him!" Her husband was reported wounded in the last bulletin that had got through from the president.

"Who is he?" a dozen demanded; and then a silence fell.

"The traitor who has betrayed our president, our country, and ourselves," the general said, "and who dies to-night, is—Lieutenant Maurice Carter!"

The silence was broken only by a long hiss—the sharp drawing of many breaths in horror and surprise. Then Estelle Lareste staggered forward.

"He is no traitor!" she cried. "He did not know. I stole the plans from him—I!"

The hissing sound died down, as if even breathing had stopped. There had been no one so loved in the city as Estelle Lareste.

"I pretended to sew the letter in his coat," she continued, twisting her handkerchief in her hands. "I took it, and put in another."

"And that," the general said sternly, "was sealed with the seal of the council—the seal that your father keeps! It contained a crafty plan to betray us to the rebels. I saw the plan before Lieutenant Carter left. He knew you for a traitress, Estelle Lareste; and he brought your letter to me!"

Estelle fainted without a sound. Her father caught her in his arm, and carried her to a big chair. The women standing near it drew away, holding their skirts as if they feared contamination. Lareste touched Estelle's pale cheek, and strode into the space in front of the general.

"Well?" he asked very steadily.

"I adopted that plan for my own," the general told him, "as the unlikeliest that the rebels would suspect. I judged that they would let Carter through with it. I hope he is now safely in Manos. *You* may know, Lareste?"

Lareste bowed.

"Carter is safely in Manos," he stated calmly. "I spared him because Estelle loves him. I have spared him for the same reason before. She took the letter from him, not for any love for the cause of freedom, but because I told her it was the only way to save his life."

"There is a proclamation on every wall," the general reminded him, "that any traitor betraying us to the enemy shall hang!"

The storm burst out again then. It would not have stopped an ugly outcry if the general had not waved them back from Lareste.

"I have never hanged a man without hearing him," he thundered, "and I won't now! I have never hung a woman yet."

The storm burst out again from the women.

"Hang her!" they cried. "Hang, hang!"

The men were silent.

"You won't hang her," Lareste said, when the general had obtained silence. "She is a child. She did it for her father's life—would you have had her betray *me?*—and for her lover's. I know you, general. I do not fear that you will hang Estelle. The only question is about myself."

"There is no question about *you!*" a voice cried. The uproar broke out again.

For a moment it seemed as if Lareste would be torn to pieces; but the officers sullenly obeyed the general's orders and kept the rest back. It was bad to look upon the men. They made one think of wolves. The women's faces made one think of the inferno.

"There is a question," Lareste insisted, when the general had obtained silence. "If you kill me, you kill your president. You have sent him directions to come out of Manos at one o'clock. At two he will reach the river pass. Our army will surround him there."

"And I shall be waiting to take your army in the rear," the general roared, "while your main force waits for me in the North Pass, according to the plan which you stole from Carter. It was a false plan to deceive you!"

He laughed fiercely. Lareste smiled.

"I thought you might try that some day," he observed. "We have scouts waiting to report the actual direction which you take, and our forces are ready to move and meet you; quite ready, general, for we do not rely merely on scouts outside the walls. Your new plan has already gone from this room. There are more 'rebels' here than I! It has been signaled from the walls. Our army will be in position long before you start. It will not seek a pitched battle, but will harass you sufficiently to prevent your reaching the river pass in time. You know how easily it can do that! We shall take the president, and if I hang he will hang!"

"If he comes to harm, *you* will hang," the general hissed. "Remember that too!" His face had gone pale.

Lareste drew himself up haughtily.

"The president was in no danger in my hands," he asserted. "I hate his policy, but I love the man. When we had captured him, I meant to say to him: 'We both love our country. Our country is not only those who follow me, and not only those who follow you. Give me your word to consult equally the wishes and needs of both, and you are free; free to rule, without competition from me. For you are the better man.' Even now, if I could meet him face to face—!"

He stopped, as if language had frozen on his lips. The rest followed his eyes to the door.

"The president!" they shouted. "The president!"

A small, gentle-faced man with a thin white mustache and scanty white hair advanced upon them, smiling and holding out his hand. Lieutenant Carter followed him. His left arm was in a sling. After him came a number of officers—a white-faced, tattered crowd, but how they smiled!

Mothers, wives, sisters, lovers, fathers, brothers, friends — all rushed upon them, kissed them, cried over them, stroked their faces. The president's hand was nearly shaken off, and the women embraced him till he gasped for breath. The fierce old chief of staff was generally reported to have wept when he shook hands, and some whispered that the general did so too.

Presently the old president stood up on the sofa. Several young officers held him protectingly, as if they feared that he might fall.

"My friends," he said, "my dear friends! God bless you! I am an old man and tired. I will say only the few things that must be said to-night. You see me here, thanks to the devotion and wisdom of Captain Carter. No one will grudge him his new rank. I have only anticipated the general's wish and yours." The general wrung Carter's uninjured hand. "He feared that the—the party of Señor Lareste, as I now learn, would keep in touch with the relieving force and prevent their reaching me in time. You have heard that he was right. So he made a new plan. We started at dusk and came through the North Pass. We surprised the—the men of the other party. They were not expecting any one from that side. They scattered — possibly the darkness magnified our little force — and we are here! There was little bloodshed. I am very glad. Let us have no more bloodshed, friends. I—you care for me, and I am getting old. Grant me that friends! Do not murmur. Lareste would not have harmed me. How can I harm Lareste? As for that child"—he pointed to Estelle, still unconscious in her chair—"when she was a baby, she used to play with the handle of my stick. It was a dog's head, as some of you may remember. Well, well! Time flies! I could make the babies happy; but they grow up and take their lives into their own hands. This little girl offered hers for her lover. *I* can't make the brave little life happy; but perhaps

Captain Carter can find another of his clever plans?"

Carter put his good arm round Estelle.

"Ah!" the president added. "That is the plan for Estelle; and for our country. Just love—God's great plan!"

I WONDER

I wonder would we mourn less
If roses all were thornless
  And kept perpetual glow:
If every fine ambition
Found quick and full fruition,
And Time, a true magician,
  Made good to better grow.

I wonder would we mourn less
If roses all were thornless,
  Nor, wilting, fell apart:
Nor Love had need to borrow
A subtle hint from Sorrow
That on some sure to-morrow
  Black Death would break Love's heart.

I wonder, ah! I wonder
If over us and under
  No cloud, no grave were waiting:
If Youth and Beauty never
Were doomed to fade or sever,
But lingered in—forever—
  A radiant May of mating:

I wonder, ah! I wonder
If Death were buried under
  The roses grown by Joy,
Whether this world we treasure
So multifaced with pleasure—
Beauty and Love *sans* measure—
  Might not begin to cloy;

And we, though still enamored,
Enhaloed still, and glamoured
  By Love's mysterious moon,
Would not, in secret places
Of prayer, with trembling faces
Alift to starry spaces,
  Beg for a loftier boon:

Beseech for spirit pinions
To spread o'er new dominions
  Of thought and feeling deep:
Beseech for death to take us—
From life's long dream to wake us—
E'en if death's end opacous
  Were endless, glacial sleep.

Yet, when this dim suggestion
Of doubt, this covert question,
  Stirs in my secret breast,
I turn mine eyes on thee, love,
In whose deep eyes I see, love,
A world from doubt so free, love,
  It quells my qualm and quest.

And as my spirit swims on
Thy sea of kisses crimson—
  Thy balmy-melting breath!—
It doth divine a morrow
Where Love need never borrow
A subtle hint from Sorrow
  That Love must end in death.

Nathalie Austin

YOU NEVER KNOW YOUR LUCK*

BEING THE STORY OF A MATRIMONIAL DESERTER

A NOVEL—COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

BY GILBERT PARKER

AUTHOR OF "THE JUDGMENT HOUSE," "THE RIGHT OF WAY,"
"THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE WRIGHT

PROEM

DID you ever see it in reaping time? A sea of gold it is, with gentle billows telling of sleep and not of storm, which, like regiments afoot, salute the reaper and say, "All is fulfilled in the light of the sun and the way of the earth; let the sharp knife fall." The countless million heads are heavy with fruition, and sun glorifies and breeze cradles them to the hour of harvest. The air—like the tingle of water from a mountain-spring in the throat of the worn wayfarer, bringing a sense of the dust of the world flushed away.

Arcady? Look closely. Here and there, like islands in the shining yellow sea, are houses—sometimes in a clump of trees, sometimes only like barebacked domesticity or naked industry in the workfield. Also rising here and there in the expanse, clouds that wind skyward, spreading out in a powdery mist. They look like the rolling smoke of incense, of sacrifice. Sacrifice it is. The vast steam thrashers are mightily devouring what their servants, the monster steam-reapers, have gleaned for them. Soon, when September comes, all that waving sea will be still. What was gold will still be a rusted gold, but near to the earth—the stubble of the corn now lying in vast garners by the railway lines, awaiting transport east and west and south and across the seas.

Not Arcady this, but a land of industry in the grip of industrialists, whose determination to achieve riches is, in spite of themselves, chastened by the magnitude and orderly process of nature's travail which is not pain. Nature hides her internal striving under a smother of white for many months in every year, when what is now gold in the sun will be a soft—sometimes, too, a hard—shining coverlet like impacted wool. Then, instead of the majestic clouds of incense from the thrashers, will rise blue spiral wreaths of smoke from the lonely home. Here the farmer rests till spring, comforting himself in the

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A FRESH YOUNG VOICE SINGING INTO THE MORNING

thought that while he waits, far under the snow the wheat is slowly expanding; and as in April, the white frost flies out of the soil into the sun, it will push upward and outward, green and vigorous, greeting his eye with the "What cheer, partner!" of a mate in the scheme of nature.

Not Arcady; and yet many of the joys of Arcady are here—bright, singing birds, wide adventurous rivers, innumerable streams, the squirrel in the wood and the bracken, the wildcat stealing through the undergrowth, the lizard glittering by the stone, the fish leaping in the stream, the plaint of the whippoorwill, the call of the bluebird, the golden flash of the oriole, the *honk* of the wild geese overhead, the whirr of the mallard from the sedge. And, more than all, a human voice declaring by its joy in song that not only God looks upon the world and finds it very good.

CHAPTER I

"PIONEERS, O PIONEERS"

If you had stood on the borders of Askatoon, a prairie town, on the pathway to the Rockies one late August day not many years ago, you would have heard a fresh young human voice singing into the morning, as its possessor looked from a coat she was brushing out over the "field of the cloth of gold," which your eye has already been invited to see. With the gift of singing for joy at all, you should be able to sing joyously at twenty-one. This morning singer was just that age; and if you had looked at the golden carpet of wheat stretching for scores of miles, before you looked at her, you would have thought her curiously reminiscent of the scene. She was a symphony in gold—nothing less. Her hair, her cheeks, her eyes, her skin, her laugh, her voice—they were all gold. Everything about her was so demonstratively golden that you might have had a suspicion it was made and not born; as though it was unreal and the girl herself a proper subject of suspicion. The eyelashes were so long and so black, the eyes were so much like a topaz, and the little glint of gold in a tooth,—the one weak member of an otherwise perfect array—that an air of faint artificiality surrounded what was in every other way a remarkable effort of nature to give this region, where she was so very busy, a keynote.

Poseurs have said that nature is garish or exaggerated in this or that; but it is a libel. She is aristocratic to the *n*th degree, and is never overdone; she has courage but no ostentation. There was, however, just a slight touch of overemphasis in this singing-girl's presentation—that you were bound to say if you considered her quite apart from her place in this nature-scheme. She was not wholly aristocratic; she was lacking in that high, social refinement which would have made her gold not so golden, the black eyelashes not so black. Being unaristocratic is not always a matter of birth, though it may be a matter of parentage.

Her parentage was honest and respectable though not exalted. Her father had been an engineer who had lost his life on a new railway of the West. His widow had received a pension from the company insufficient to maintain her, and so she kept two boarders, the coat of one of whom her daughter was now brushing as she sang. The widow herself was the origin of the girl's slight disqualification for being of that higher circle of selection which nature arranges long before society makes its judicial decision. The father had been a man of intelligence, which his daughter to a real degree inherited; but the mother, as kind a soul as ever lived, was a product of southern English rural life—a little sumptuous, but wholesome, and for her daughter's sake at least, keeping herself well and safely within the moral pale in the midst of marked temptations. She was forty-five, and it says a good deal for her ample but proper graces that at forty-five she had numerous admirers. The girl was English in appearance, with a touch perhaps of Spanish—why, who can say? Was it because of those Spanish hidalgos wrecked on the Irish coast long since? Her mind and her tongue, however, were Irish like her father's. You would have liked her,—everybody did—yet you would have thought that nature had overdone herself for once, she was so pointedly designed to express the ancient dame's color-scheme, even to the delicate auriferous down on her youthful cheek and the purse-proud look of her faintly retroussé nose; though in fact she never had had a purse and scarcely needed one. In any case she had an ample pocket in her dress.

This fairly full description of her is given not because she is the most important person in the story, but because the end of the story would have been entirely different had it not been for her; and because she herself was one of those who are so much the sport of circumstances or chance that they express the full meaning of the title of this story. As a line beneath the title explains, the tale concerns a matrimonial deserter. Certainly this girl had never deserted matrimony, though she had on more than one occasion avoided it; and there had been men mean and low enough to imagine they might allure her to the conditions of matrimony without its status.

As with her mother the advertisement of her appearance was wholly misleading. A man had once said to her that "she looked too gay to be good," but in all essentials she was as good as she was gay, and indeed rather better. Her mother had not kept boarders for seven years without getting some useful knowledge of the world, or without imparting useful knowledge; and there were men who, having paid their bills on demand, turned from her wiser if not better men. Because they had pursued the old but inglorious profession of hunting tame things, Mrs. Tyndall Tynan had exacted compensation in one way or another—by extras, by occasional and deliberate omission of table luxuries, and by making them pay for their own mending, which she herself only did when her boarders behaved themselves well. She scored in any contest—in spite of her rather small brain, large heart, and ardent appearance. A very clever, shiftless Irish husband had made her develop shrewdness, and she was so busy watching and fending her daughter that she did not need to watch and fend herself to the same extent as she would have done had she been free and childless and thirty. The widow Tynan was practical, and she saw none of those things which made her daughter stand for minutes at a time and look into the distance over the prairie towards the sunset light or the blue green foothills. She never sang—she had never sung a note in her life; but this girl of hers, with a man's coat in her hand, and eyes on the joyous scene before her, was forever humming or singing. She had even sung in the church choir till she declined to do so any longer, because strangers stared at her so; which goes to show that she was not so vain as people of her coloring sometimes are. It was just as bad, however, when she sat in the congregation; for then, too, if she sang, people stared at her. So it was that she seldom went to church at all; but it was not because of this that her ideas of right and wrong were quite individual and not conventional, as the tale of the matrimonial deserter will show.

This was not church, however, and briskly applying a light whisk-broom to the coat, she sang one of the songs her father taught her when he was in his buoyant or in his sentimental moods, and that was a good portion of the time. It used to perplex her—the thrilling buoyancy and the creepy melancholy which alternately held her father; but as a child she had become so inured to it that she was not surprised at the alternate pensive gaiety and the blazing exhilaration of the particular man whose coat she now dusted long after there remained a speck of dust upon it. This was the song she sang:

"Whereaway, whereaway goes the lad that once was mine;
  Hereaway I waited him, hereaway and oft;
When I sang my song to him, bright his eyes began to shine—
  Hereaway I loved him well, for my heart was soft.

"Hereaway my heart was soft; when he kissed my happy eyes,
  Held my hand, and pressed his cheek warm against my brow,
Home I saw upon the earth, heaven stood there in the skies—
  Whereaway, whereaway goes my lover now?

"Whereaway goes my lad—tell me, has he gone alone?
  Never harsh word did I speak, never hurt I gave;
Strong he was and beautiful; like a heron he has flown—
  Hereaway, hereaway will I make my grave.

"When once more the lad I loved hereaway, hereaway,
  Comes to lay his hand in mine, kiss me on the brow,
I will whisper down the wind, he will weep to hear me say—
  'Whereaway, whereaway goes my lover now!'"

There was a plaintive quality in the voice of this golden creature in perfect keeping with the music and the words; and though her lips smiled, there was a deep, far-away look in her eyes more in harmony with the coming autumn than with this gorgeous harvest-time.

For a moment after she had finished singing she stood unmoving, absorbed by the far horizon; then suddenly she gave a little shake of the body and said in a brisk, playfully reproving way:

"Kitty Tynan, Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are!"

There was no one near, so far as eye could see, so it was clear the words were addressed to herself.

She was expressing that wonder which so many folk feel at discovering in themselves characteristics heretofore unrecognized, or find themselves doing things out of their natural orbit, as they think. If any one had told Kitty Tynan that she had rare imagination she would have wondered what was meant. If any one had said to her, "What are you dreaming about, Kitty?" she would have understood, however, for she had had fits of dreaming ever since she was a child, and these fits had increased during the past two years—since the man came to live with them whose coat she had been brushing. Perhaps this was only imitation, because the man had a habit of standing or sitting still and looking into space for minutes—and on Sundays for hours—at a time; and often she had watched him as he lay on his back in the long grass, head on a hillock, hat down over his eyes, while the smoke from his pipe came curling up from beneath the rim. Also she had seen him more than once sitting with a letter before him and gazing at it for many minutes together. The curious thing was that it was the same letter on each occasion. It was a closed letter, and it also was unstamped. She knew that, because she had seen it in his desk—the desk once belonging to her father, a sloping thing with a green baize top. Sometimes he kept it locked, but very often he did not; and more than once, when he had asked her to get him something from the desk, not out of meanness, but chiefly because her moral standard had not a multitude of delicate punctilios, she had looked curiously at this letter. The envelope bore a woman's handwriting, and the name on it was not that of the man who owned the coat—and the letter. The name on the envelope was Shiel Crozier, Esq., but the name of the man who owned the coat was J. G. Kerry—James Gathorne Kerry, so he said.

Kitty Tynan had certainly enough imagination to make her cherish a mystery. She wondered greatly what it all meant. Never in anything else had she been inquisitive or prying where this man was concerned; but she felt that this letter had the heart of a story, and she made up fifty stories which she thought would fit the case of J. G. Kerry, who for over four years had lived in her mother's house. He had become part of her life, perhaps just because he was a man—and what home is a real home without a man?—perhaps because he always had a kind, quiet word for her, and sometimes a word of buoyant cheerfulness; indeed, he showed in his manner occasionally almost a boisterous hilarity. He undoubtedly was what her mother called " a queer Dick," but also " a pippin with a perfect core," which was her way of saying that he was a man to be trusted with herself and with her daughter; who would stand loyally by a friend or a woman. He had stood by them both when Augustus Burlingame, the lawyer, who had boarded with them when J. G. Kerry first came, coarsely exceeded the bounds of liberal friendliness which marked the household and by furtive attempts at intimacy began to make life impossible for both mother and daughter. Burlingame took it into his head, when he received notice that his rooms were needed for another boarder, that J. G. Kerry was the cause of it. Perhaps this was not without reason, since Kerry had seen Kitty Tynan angrily unclasping Burlingame's arm from around her waist, and had used cutting and decisive words to the sensualist afterwards.

There had taken the place of Augustus Burlingame a land-agent—Jesse Bulrush—who came and went like a catapult, now in domicile for three days together, now gone for three weeks, a voluble, gaseous, humorous fellow, who covered up a well of commercial evasiveness, honesty and adroitness by a perspiring gaiety natural in its origin and convenient for harmless deceit. He was fifty, and no gallant save in words; and though a bachelor of so many years' standing it was a long time before he showed a tendency even to blandish a good-looking middle-aged nurse named Egan who also lodged with Mrs. Tynan; though even a plain-faced nurse in uniform has an advantage over a handsome unprofessional woman. Jesse Bulrush and J. G. Kerry were friends — became such confidential friends indeed to all appearance, though their social origin was evidently so different, that Kitty Tynan, when she wished to have a pleasant conversation which gave her a glow for hours after, talked to the fat man of his lean and aristocratic-looking friend.

" Got his head where it ought to be—on his shoulders; and it ain't for playing football with," was the frequent remark of Mr. Bulrush concerning Mr. Kerry, and this always made Kitty Tynan want to sing, she could not have told why, save that it seemed to her the equivalent of a long history of the man whose past lay in mists that never lifted, and whom even the inquisitive Burlingame had been unable to probe when he lived in the same house. But then Kitty Tynan was as fond of singing as a canary, and relieved her feelings

AUGUSTUS BURLINGAME'S SUDDEN ATTEMPTS AT INTIMACY constantly by this virtuous and becoming means, with her good contralto voice—a creature of contradictions; for if ever any one should have had a soprano voice it was she. She looked a soprano.

What she was thinking of as she sang with Kerry's coat in her hand it would be hard to discover by the process of elimination, as the detectives say when they are searching for a criminal. It is, however, of no consequence; but it was clear that the song she sang had moved her, for there was the glint of a tear in her eye as she turned towards the house, the words of the song singing themselves over in her brain:

" Hereaway my heart was soft; when he kissed my happy eyes,
Held my hand, and pressed his cheek warm against my brow,
Home I saw upon the earth, heaven stood there in the skies—
Whereaway, whereaway goes my lover now? "

She knew that no lover had left her; that none was in the habit of laying his warm cheek against her brow; and perhaps that was why she had said aloud to herself, " Kitty Tynan, Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are!" Perhaps—and perhaps not.

As she stepped forward towards the door she heard a voice within the house and she quickened her footsteps. The blood in her face, the look in her eye quickened also. A figure appeared at the doorway—a figure in shirt-sleeves, which shook a fist at the hurrying girl.

" Villain!" he said gaily, for he was in one of his ebullient moods—after a long talk with Jesse Bulrush. " Hither with my coat; my spotless coat in a spotted world,—the unbelievable anomaly—

" 'For the earth of a dusty to-day
Is the dust of an earthly to-morrow.' "

When he talked like this she did not understand him, but she thought it was clever beyond thinking—a heavenly jumble. " If it wasn't for me you'd be carted for rubbish," she replied joyously as she helped him on with his coat, though he had made a motion to take it from her.

" I heard you singing—what was it?" he asked cheerfully on the surface, though his mind was on weighty things. The song she had sung, floating through the air, had seemed familiar to him, though he had been greatly preoccupied with a big thing—a big business thing, which he had been planning for a long time, with Jesse Bulrush in the background or foreground, as scout or rear-guard or what you will.

" 'Whereaway, whereaway goes the lad that once was mine,
Hereaway I waited him, hereaway and oft—' "

she hummed with an exaggerated gaiety in her voice, for the song had made her sad, she knew not why.

At the words the flaming exhilaration of his look vanished, his eyes took on a strange poignant, distant look.

" That—oh, that!" he said, and with a little jerk of the head and a clenching of the hand he moved towards the street.

" Your hat!" she called after him, and ran inside the house. An instant later she gave it to him. Now his face was clear and his eyes smiled kindly at her.

" 'Whereaway, hereaway,' is a wonderful song," he said. " We used to sing it when I was a boy—and after, and after. It's an old song—as old as the hills. Well, thanks—Kitty Tynan, Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are, to be so kind to a fellow like me!" he added.

" Kitty Tynan, Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are "—these were the very words she had used about herself a little while before. The song—why did it make Mr. Kerry go so strange in face all in a moment when he heard it? Kitty watched him striding down the street into the town.

Now a voice—a rich, quizzical, kindly voice—called out to her.

" Come, come, Miss Tynan, I want to be helped on with my coat," it said.

Inside the house a fat, awkward man was struggling, or pretending to struggle, into his coat.

" Roll into it, Mr. Roly-poly," she answered gaily as she entered.

" Of course I'm not the star-boarder—nothing for me!" he said in affected irony and protest.

" A little more to starboard and you'll get the coat on," she retorted with a glint of her late father's raillery, and she gave the coat a twitch which put it right on the ample shoulders.

"Bully! bully!" he said; "I'll give you the tip for the Askatoon cup."

"I'm a Christian. I hate horse-racers and gamblers," she returned mockingly.

"I'll turn Christian—I want to be loved, not hated," he chortled in the doorway.

"Roll on, proud porpoise!" she returned; which shows that her conversation was not quite aristocratic at all times.

"Golly, but she's a gold dollar in a gold bank!" Jesse Bulrush said as he lurched into the street.

She stood still in the middle of the room looking down the way the two men had gone. The quiet of the late summer day surrounded her. She heard the dizzy din of the bees, the sleepy grinding of the grasshoppers, the sough of the solitary pine at the door, and then behind them all a whizzing, machinelike sound. This particular sound went on and on.

She opened the door of the next room. Her mother sat at a sewing-machine intent upon her work, the needle eating up a spreading piece of cloth. "What are you making, mother?" Kitty asked.

"New blinds for Mr. Kerry's bedroom—he likes this green color," the widow added with a slight flush due to leaning over the sewing-machine, no doubt.

"Everybody does everything for him," remarked the girl almost pettishly.

"That's a nice spirit, I must say!" replied her mother, looking up reprovingly, the machine almost stopping.

"If I said it in a different way it would be all right," the other returned with a smile, and she repeated the words with a winning soft inflection like a born actress.

"Kitty—Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are!" declared her mother, and she bent smiling over the machine, which presently buzzed on its devouring way.

Three people had said the same thing within a few minutes. A look of pleasure stole over the girl's face, and her bosom rose and fell with a happy sigh. Somehow it was quite a wonderful day for her.

CHAPTER II

CLOSING THE DOORS

THERE are many people who, in some subtle psychological way, are very like their names; as though some one had whispered to "the parents of this child" the name designed for it from the beginning of time. So it was with Shiel Crozier. Does not the name suggest a man lean and flat, sinewy, angular and isolated like a figure in one of El Greco's pictures in the Prado at Madrid? Does not the name suggest a figure of elongated humanity with a touch of ancient mysticism and yet also with a dash of the fantastical humor of Don Quixote?

In outward appearance Shiel Crozier, otherwise J. G. Kerry, of Askatoon, was like his name for the greater part of the time. Take him in repose and he looked a lank ascetic who dreamed of a happy land where flagellation was a joy and pain a panacea. In action, however, as when Kitty Tynan helped him on with his coat, he was a pure improvisation of nature. He had a face with a Cromwellian mole, which broke out in emotion like an April day, with eyes changing from a blue-gray to the deepest ultramarine that ever delighted the soul and made the reputation of an Old Master. Even in the prairie town of Askatoon, where every man is so busy that he scarcely knows his own children when he meets them, and almost requires an introduction to his wife when the door closes on them at bedtime, people took a second look at him when he passed. Many who came in much direct contact with him, as Augustus Burlingame the lawyer, had done, tried to draw from him all there was to tell about himself; which is a friendly custom of the far West. The native-born greatly desire to tell about themselves. They wear their hearts on their sleeves, and are childlike in the frank recitals of all they were and are and hope to be. This covers up also a good deal of business acumen, shrewdness and secretiveness which is not so childlike and bland.

In this they are in sharp contrast to those not native-born. These come from many places on the earth, and they are seldom garrulously historical. Some of them go to the prairie country to forget they ever lived before, and to begin the world again, having been hurt in life undeservingly; some go to bury their mistakes or worse in pioneer work and adventure; some flee from a wrath that would devour them—the law, society, or a woman.

This much must be said at once for Crozier, that he had no crime to hide. It was not because of crime that " He buckles up his mouth like the bellyband on a bronco," as Malachi Deely, the exile from Tralee, said of him; and Deely was a man of " horse-sense," no doubt because he was a horse-doctor—" a veterenny surgeon," as his friends called him when they wished to flatter him. Deely added to this chaste remark about the bronco, that " Same as the bronco, you buckle him tightest when you know the divil is stirring in his underbrush." And he added further, " 'Tis a woman that's put the mum-plaster on his tongue, Sibley, and I bet you a hunderd it's another man's wife."

Like many a speculator, Malachi Deely would have made no profit out of his bet in the end, for Shiel Crozier had had no trouble with the law, or with another man's wife, nor yet with any single maid—not yet; though there was now Kitty Tynan in his path. Yet he had had trouble. There was hint of it in his occasional profound abstraction; but more than all else by the fact that here he was a gentleman, having lived his life for over four years past as a sort of horse-expert, overseer, and stud-manager for Terry Brennan, the absentee millionaire. In the opinion of the West, " big-bugs " didn't come down to this kind of occupation unless they had been roughly handled by fate or fortune —by the law, society, or a woman.

" Talk? Watch me now—he talks like a testimonial in a frame," said Malachi Deely on the day this tale opens, to John Sibley, the gambling young farmer who, strange to say, did well out of both gambling and farming.

" Words to him are like nuts to a monkey—he's an artist, that man is. Been in the circles where the band plays good and soft, where the music smells—fairly smells like parfumery," responded Sibley. " I'd like to get at the bottom of him. There's a real good story under his asbestos vest—something that'd make a man call for the oh-be-joyful, same as I do now!"

After they had seen the world through the bottom of a tumbler Deely continued the gossip. " Watch me now — been a friend of dukes in England and Ireland, that Mr. James Gathorne Kerry as any one can see; and there he is now feelin' the hocks of a filly or openin' the jaws of a stud-horse, age hunting! Why, you needn't tell me—I've had my mind made up ever since the day he broke the temper of that Inniskillen chestnut of Mr. Brennan's, and won the gold cup with her afterwards. He just sort of appeared out of the mist of the marnin', there being a divil's lot of excursions and conferences and holy gatherings in Askatoon that time back, ostensible for the business which their names denote, like the Diocessan Conference and the Pure White Water Society. That was their bluff; but they'd come for one good pure white diocessan thing before all, and that was to see the dandiest horse-racing which ever infested the West. Come—he come like that!"—Deely made a motion like the swoop of an aeroplane to earth—" and here he is buckin' about like a rough-neck same as you and me; but yet a gent, a swell, a cream della cream, that's turned his back on a lady—a lady not his own wife, that's my belief."

" You surely have got women on the brain," retorted Sibley. " I ain't ever seen such a man as you. There never was a woman crossing the street on a muddy day that you didn't sprint to get a look at her ankles. Behind everything you see a woman. Horses is your profession, but woman is your practise."

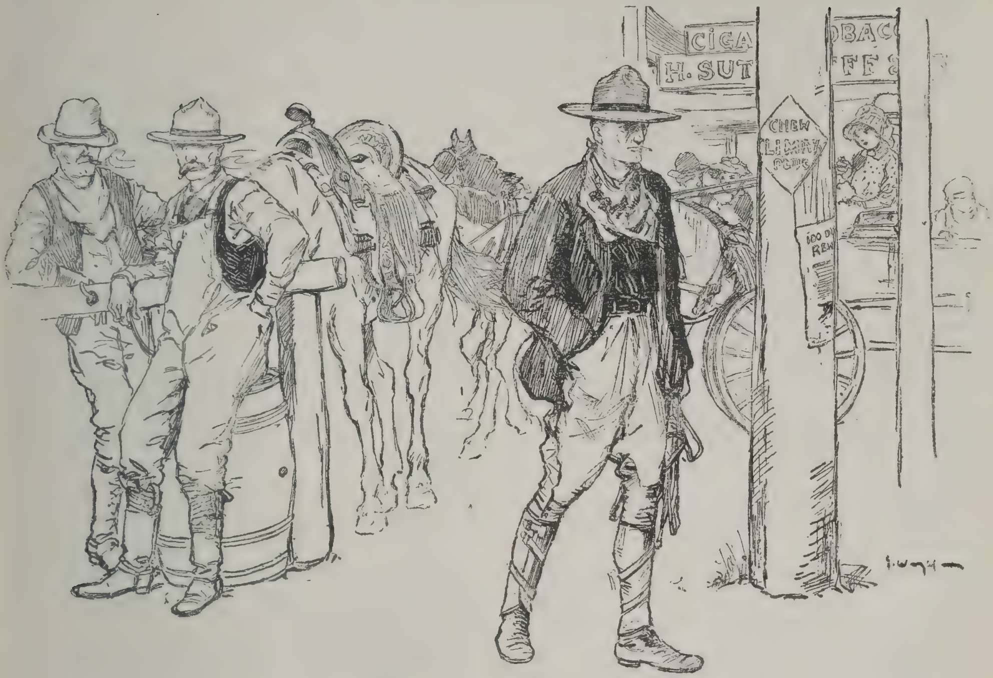
" There ain't but one thing worth living for, and that's a woman," remarked Deely.

" Do you tell Mrs. Deely that?" asked Sibley.

" Watch me now, she knows—what woman is there don't know when her husband is what he is! And it's how I know that the trouble with James Gathorne Kerry is a woman. I know the signs. Divils me own, he's got 'em in his face."

" He's got in his face what don't belong here and what you don't know much about —never having kept company with that sort," retorted Sibley.

" The way he lives and talks—' No, thank you, I don't care for anny thing,' says he, when you're standin' at the door of a friendly saloon, which is established



PEOPLE TOOK A SECOND LOOK AT HIM WHEN HE PASSED

by law to bespeak peace and good-will towards men, and you ask him pleasant to come. He don't seem to have a single vice. Haven't we tried him? There was Belle Bingley, all frizzy hair and a kicker, we put her onto him. But he give her ten dollars to buy a hat on condition she behaved like a lady in the future—smilin' at her, the divil! And Belle, with temper like dinnamite, took it kneelin', as it were, and smiled back at him — her. Drink, women—nothin' seems to have a hold on him. What's his vice? Sure, then, that's what I say—what's his vice? He's got to have one—anny man as is a man has to have one vice."

"Bosh! Look at me," rejoined Sibley. "Drink—women—nit! Not for me! I've got no vice. I don't even smoke."

"No vice? Begobs, yours has got you like a tire on a wheel! Vice—what do you call gamblin'? It's the biggest vice ever tuk grip of a man. It's like a fever, and it's got you, John, like the nail on your finger."

"Well, p'r'aps, he's got that vice, too—p'r'aps J. G. Kerry's got that vice same as me."

"Annyhow, we'll get to know all we want when he goes into the witness-box at the Logan murder trial next week—that's what I'm waitin' for," Deely returned with a grin of anticipation. "That opium-eating Gus Burlingame's got a grudge against him somehow, and when a lawyer's got a grudge against you it's just as well to look where y' are goin'. Burlingame don't care what he does to get his way in court. What set him against Kerry I ain't sure, but, bedad, I think it's looks. Burlingame goes in for looking like a picture in a frame —gold seals hangin' beyant his vest-pocket, broad silk cord to his eye-glass, loose flowin' tie, and long hair—makes him look pretentuous and showy. But your 'Mr. Kerry, sir,' he don't have anny tricks to make him look like a doge from Veenis and all the eyes of the females battin' where'er he goes. Jealousy, John Sibley, me boy, is a cruil thing."

"Why is it *you* ain't jealous of him? There's plenty of women that watch you go down-town—you got a name for it, anyway," remarked Sibley maliciously.

Deely nodded sagely. "Watch me now, that's right, me boy! I got a name for it, but I want the game without the name, and that's why I ain't puttin' on anny airs —none at all. I depend on me tongue, not on me looks, which goes against me. I like Mr. J. G. Kerry. I've plenty dealin's with him, naturally, both of us being in the horse business, and I say he's right as a gold dollar as he goes now. Also, and behold, I'd take my oath he never done anything to blush for. His trouble's been a woman—wayward woman what stoops to folly! Watch me now, I give up tryin' to pump him just as soon as I made up my mind it was a woman. That shuts a man's mouth like a poor-box."

"Next week's fixed for the Logan killin' case, is it?"

"Monday comin', for sure. I wouldn't like to be in Mr. Kerry's shoes. Watch me now, if he gives the evidence they say he can give—the prasecution say it—that Macmahon Gang behind Logan 'll get him sure as guns, one way or another."

"Some one ought to give Mr. Kerry the tip to get out and not give evidence," remarked Sibley sagely.

Deely shook his head vigorously. "Begobs, he's had the tip all right, but he's not goin'. He's got as much fear as a canary has whiskers. He doesn't want to give evidence, he says, but he wants to see the law do its work. Burlingame 'll try to make it out manslaughter; but there's a widow with two children to suffer for the manslaughter, just as much as though it was murder, and there isn't a man that doesn't think murder was the game, and the grand joory had that idea, too."

"Between Gus Burlingame and that Macmahon bunch of horse-thieves, the stranger in a strange land 'll have to keep his eyes open, I'm thinkin'."

"Divils me darlin', his eyes are open all right," returned Deely.

"Still I'd like to jog his elbow," Sibley answered reflectively. "It couldn't do any harm, and it might do good."

Deely nodded good-naturedly. "If you want to so bad as that, John, you've got the chance, for he's up at the Sovereign Bank now. I seen him leave the Great Overland Railway Bureau ten minutes ago and get away quick to the bank."

"What's he got on at the bank and the railway?"

"Watch me, but it's some big deal. I've seen him with Studd Bradley—"

"The Great North Trust Company boss?"

"On it, my boy, on it—the other day as thick as thieves. Studd Bradley doesn't knit up with an outsider from the old country unless there's reason for it—good gold-currency reasons."

"A land deal, eh?" ventured Sibley. "What did I say—speculation, that's his vice, same as mine! P'r'aps that's what ruined him. Cards, speculation, what's the difference? And he's got a quiet look —same as me."

Deely laughed loudly. "And bursts out same as you! Quiet one hour like a mill-pond or a well, and then — *whish,* he's blazin'! He's a volcano in harness, that spalpeen."

"He's a volcano that doesn't erupt when there's danger," responded Sibley. "It's when there's just fun on that his volcano gets loose. I'll go wait for him at the bank. I got a fellow-feeling for Mr. Kerry. I'd like to whisper in his ear that he'd better be lookin' sharp for the Macmahon Gang, and that if he's a man of peace he'd best take a holiday till after next week, or get smallpox or something."

The two friends lounged slowly up the street, and presently parted near the door of the bank. As Sibley waited, his attention was drawn to a window on the opposite side of the street at an angle from themselves. The light was such that the room was revealed to its farthest corners, and Sibley noted that three men were evidently carefully watching the bank, and that one of the men was Studd Bradley, the so-called boss. The others were local men of some weight and position commercially and financially in the town. Sibley did not give any sign that he noticed the three men, but he watched carefully from under the rim of his hat. His observant imagination, however, read a story of consequence in the secretive vigilance of the three, who evidently thought that, standing far back in the room, they could not be seen.

Presently the door of the bank opened, and Sibley saw Studd Bradley lean forward eagerly, then draw back and speak hurriedly to his companions, using a gesture of satisfaction.

"Something damn funny there!" Sibley said to himself, and stepped forward to Crozier with a friendly exclamation.

Crozier turned rather impatiently, for his face was aflame with some exciting reflection. At this moment his eyes were the deepest blue that could be imagined—an almost impossible color, like that of the Mediterranean when it reflects the perfect sapphire of the sky. There was something almost wonderful in their expression. A woman once said as she looked at a picture of Herschel, whose eyes had the unworldly gaze of the great dreamer looking beyond this sphere, "The stars startled him." Such a look was in Crozier's eyes now, as though he was seeing the bright end of a long road, the desire of his soul.

That, indeed, was what he saw. After two years of secret negotiation he had (from accidental knowledge got from Jesse Bulrush, his fellow-boarder) come to the accomplishment of a big land deal in relation to the route of a new railway and a town-site, which would mean more to him than any one could know. If it went through he would have for an investment of ten thousand dollars a hundred and fifty thousand dollars; and that would solve an everlasting problem for him.

He had reached a critical point in his enterprise. All that was wanted now was ten thousand dollars in cash to enable him to close the great bargain and make his hundred and fifty thousand. But to want ten thousand dollars and to get it in a given space of time, when you have neither securities, cash, nor real estate, is enough to keep you awake at night. Crozier had been so busy getting the big business of the deal in shape that he had not deeply concerned himself with the absence of the necessary ten thousand dollars. He thought that he could get the money at the last moment, so good was the proposition; and it was best to leave raising the money to the last moment to avoid some one else cutting in and forestalling him. He must first have the stake to be played for before he moved to get the money with which to make the throw. This is not generally thought a good way, but it was his way, and it had yet to be tested.

There was no cloud of apprehension, however, in Crozier's eyes as they met those of Sibley. He liked Sibley. At this point it is not necessary to say why. The reason will appear in due time. Sibley's face had always something of that immobility and gravity which Crozier's face had part of the time — paler, less intelligent, with dark lines and secret shadows which Crozier's face had not; but still with some of the El Greco characteristics which marked so powerfully that of Shiel Crozier, who passed as J. G. Kerry.

"Ah, Sibley," he said, "glad to see you. Anything I can do for you?"

"It's the other way if there's any doing at all," was the quick response.

"Well, let's walk along together," remarked Crozier cheerfully, though a little abstractedly, for he was thinking hard about his great enterprise.

"We might be seen," said Sibley, with an obvious undermeaning meant to provoke a question.

Crozier caught the undertone of suggestion. "Being about to burgle the bank, it's well not to be seen together—eh?"

"No, I'm not in on that business, Mr. Kerry. I'm for breaking banks, not burgling 'em," was the grim, merry reply.

They laughed, but Crozier knew that the observant gambling farmer was not talking at haphazard. They had met on the highway, as it were, many times since Crozier had come to Askatoon, and Crozier knew his man.

"Well, what *are* we going to do and who will see us if we do it?" Crozier asked briskly.

"Studd Bradley and his secret-service corps have got their eyes on this street—and on you," returned Sibley dryly.

Crozier's face sobered from its exhilaration and his eyes became less emotional. "I don't see them anywhere," he answered, but looking nowhere.

"They're in Gus Burlingame's office. They had you under observation while you were in the bank."

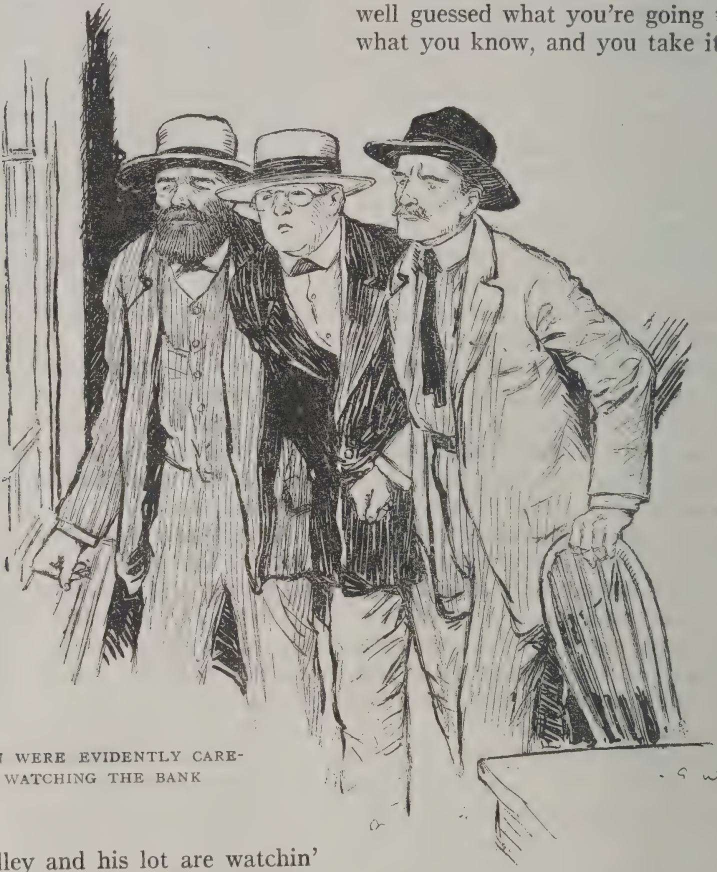
"I couldn't run off with the land, could I?" Crozier remarked dryly, yet suggestively, in his desire to see how much Sibley knew.

"Well, you said it was a bank. I've no more idea what it is you're trying to run off with than I know what an ace is going to do when there's a joker in the pack," remarked Sibley; "but I thought I'd tell you that Bradley and his lot are watchin' you gettin' ready to run." Then he hastily told what he had seen.

Crozier was reassured. It was natural that Bradley & Co. should take an interest in his movements. They would make a pile of money if he pulled off the deal—far more than he would. It wasn't strange that they should watch him going into the bank. They knew he wanted money, and a bank was the place to get it. That was the way he viewed the matter on the instant. He replied to Sibley cheerfully.

"A hundred to one is a lot when you win it," he said enigmatically.

"It depends on how much you have on," was Sibley's quiet reply—"a dollar or a thousand dollars. If you've got a big thing on, and you've got an outsider that you think is going to win and beat the favorite, it's just as well to run no risks. Believe me, Mr. Kerry, if you've got anything on that asks for your attention, it'd be sense and saving if you didn't give evidence at the Logan Trial next week. It's pretty well guessed what you're going to say and what you know, and you take it from me, the Macmahon mob that's behind Logan 'll have it in for you. They're terrors when they get goin', and if your evidence puts one of that lot away, there'll be trouble for you. I wouldn't do it—honest, I wouldn't. I've been out West here a good many years, and I know the place and the people. It's a good place and there's lots of first-class people here, but there's a few offscourings that hang like wolves on the edge of the sheepfold, ready to murder and git."


THREE MEN WERE EVIDENTLY CAREFULLY WATCHING THE BANK

"*That* was what you wanted to see me about, wasn't it?" Crozier asked quietly.

"Yes; the other was just a shot on the

chance. I don't like to see men sneaking about and watching. If they do, you can bet there's something wrong. But the other thing, the Logan Trial business, is a dead certainty. You're only a newcomer, in a kind of way, and you don't need to have the same responsibility as the rest. The Law'll get what it wants whether you chip in or not. Let it alone. What's the Law ever done for you that you should run risks for it? It's straight talk, Mr. Kerry. Have a cancer in the bowels next week or go off to see a dying brother, but don't give evidence at the Logan Trial—don't do it. I got a feeling—I'm superstitious—all sportsmen are. By following my instincts I've saved myself a whole lot in my time."

"Yes, all men that run chances have their superstitions, and they're not to be sneered at," replied Crozier thoughtfully. "If you see black, don't play white; if you see a chestnut crumpled up, put your money on the bay even when the chestnut is a favorite. Of course you're superstitious, Sibley. The tan and the green baize are covered with ghosts that want to help you, if you'll let them."

Sibley's mouth opened in amazement. Crozier was speaking with the look of the man who hypnotizes himself, who "sees things," who dreams as only the gambler and the plunger on the turf do dream, not even excepting the latter-day Irish poets.

"Say, I was right what I said to Deely—I was right," remarked Sibley almost huskily, for it seemed to him as though he had found a long-lost brother. No man except one who had staked all he had again and again could have looked or spoken like that.

Crozier looked at the other thoughtfully for a moment, then he said:

"I don't know what you said to Deely, but I do know that I'm going to the Logan Trial in spite of the Macmahon mob. I don't feel about it as you do. I've got a different feeling, Sibley. I'll play the game out. I shall not hedge. I shall not play for safety. It's everything on the favorite this time."

"You'll excuse me, but morphia-sucking Gus Burlingame is for the defense, and he's got his knife into you," returned Sibley.

"Not yet." Crozier smiled almost sardonically.

"Well, I apologize, but what I've said, Mr. Kerry, is said as man to man. You're ridin' game in a tough place, as any man has to do who starts with only his pants and his head on. That's the way you begun here, I guess; and I don't want to see your horse tumble because some one throws a fence-rail at its legs. Your class has enemies always in a new country—jealousy, envy."

The lean, aristocratic, angular Crozier, with a musing look on his long face, grown ascetic again, as he held out his hand and gripped that of the other, said warmly: "I'm just as much obliged to you as though I took your advice, Sibley. I am not taking it, but I am taking a pledge to return the compliment to you if ever I get the chance."

"Well, most men get chances of that kind," was the gratified reply of the gambling farmer, and then Crozier turned quickly and entered the doorway of the British Bank, the rival of that from which he had turned in disappointment a little while before.

Left alone in the street, Sibley looked back with the instinct of the hunter. As he expected, he saw a head thrust out from the window where Studd Bradley and his friends had been. There was a hotel opposite the British Bank. He entered and waited. Bradley and one of his companions presently came in and seated themselves far back in the shadow, where they could watch the doorway of the bank.

It was quite a half-hour before Shiel Crozier emerged from the bank. His face was set and pale. For an instant he stood as though wondering which way to go, then he moved up the street the way he had come.

Sibley heard a low, poisonous laugh of triumph rankle through the hotel office. He turned round. Bradley, the overfed, overconfident, overestimated financier, laid his hand on the shoulder of his companion as they moved toward the door.

"That's another gate shut," he said. "I guess we can close 'em all with a little care. It's working all right. He's got no chance of raising the cash," he added, as the two passed the chair where Sibley sat with his hat over his eyes, chewing an unlighted cigar.

" I don't know what it is, but it's dirt—and muck at that," John Sibley remarked as he rose from his chair and followed the two into the street.

Bradley and his friends were trying steadily to close up the avenues of credit to the man to whom the success of his enterprise meant so much. To crowd him out would mean an extra hundred and fifty thousand dollars for themselves.

CHAPTER III

THE LOGAN TRIAL AND WHAT CAME OF IT

WHAT the case was in which Shiel Crozier was to give evidence is not important; what came from the giving of his testimony is all that matters; and this story would never have been written if he had not entered the witness-box.

A court-room at any time seems a little warmer than any other spot to all except the prisoner; but on a July day it is likely to be a punishment for both innocent and guilty. A man had been killed by one of the group of toughs called locally the Macmahon Gang, and against the charge of murder that of manslaughter had been set up in defense; and manslaughter might mean jail for a year or two or no jail at all. Any evidence which justified the charge of murder would mean not jail, but the rope in due course; for this was not Montana or Idaho where the law's delays outlasted even the memory of the crime committed.

The court-room of Askatoon was crowded to suffocation, for the Macmahons were detested, and the murdered man had a good reputation in the district. Besides, a widow and three children mourned their loss, and the widow was in court. Also Crozier's evidence was expected to be sensational, and to prove the swivel on which the fate of the accused man would hang. Among those on the inside it was also known that the clever but dissipated Augustus Burlingame, the counsel for the prisoner, had a grudge against Crozier—no one quite knew why except Kitty Tynan and her mother—and that cross-examination would be pressed mercilessly when Crozier entered the witness-box. As Burlingame entered the court-room he said to the Young Doctor,—he was always spoken of as the Young Doctor in Askatoon, though he had been there a good many years and he was no longer as young as he looked—who was also called as a witness, " We'll know more about Mr. J. G. Kerry when this trial is over than will suit his book." It did not occur to Augustus Burlingame that Crozier might find a way of throwing doubt on the fitness of the lawyer to represent innocence or the law, in view of the reason why he had fled the house of the showy but virtuous Mrs. Tynan.

Crozier entered the witness-box at a stage when excitement was at fever height; for the Macmahon Gang had given evidence which every one believed to be perjured; and the widow of the slain man was weeping bitterly in her seat because of noxious falsehoods sworn against her honest husband.

There was certainly something very credible and prepossessing in the appearance of Crozier. He might be this or that, but he carried no evil or vice of character in his face. He was in his grave mood this summer afternoon. There he stood with his long face and the very heavy eyebrows, clean-shaven, hard-bitten, as though by wind and weather, composed and forceful, the mole on his chin a kind of challenge to the vertical dimple in his cheek, his high forehead more benevolent than intellectual, his brown hair faintly sprinkled with gray and a bit unmanageable, his fathomless eyes shining.

" No man ought to have such eyes," remarked a woman present to the Young Doctor, who abstractedly nodded assent, for like Malachi Deely and John Sibley, he himself had a theory about Crozier; and he had a fear of what the savage enmity of the morally and physically diseased Burlingame might do. He had made up his mind that so intense a scrupulousness as Crozier had shown since coming to Askatoon had behind it not only character, but the rigidity of a set purpose; and that view was supported by the stern economy of Crozier's daily life, broken only by sudden bursts of generosity for those in need.

In the box Crozier kept his eye on the crown attorney, who prosecuted, and on the judge. He appeared not to see any one in the court-room, though Kitty Tynan had so placed herself that he must see her if he looked at the audience at all. Kitty thought him magnificent as he told his story with a simple parsimony, but a thrilling choice of words which made every syllable poignant with effect. She liked him in his grave mood even better than when he was aflame with an internal fire of his own creation, when he was almost wildly vivid with life.

"He's two men," she had often said to herself; and she said it now as she looked at him in the witness-box, measuring out his words and measuring off at the same time the span of a murderer's life; for when the crown attorney said to the judge that he had concluded his examination there was no one in the room—not even the graceless Burlingame, who did not think the prisoner guilty.

"That is all," the crown attorney said to Crozier as he sank into his chair, greatly pleased with one of the best witnesses who had ever been through his hands—lucid, concentrated, exact, knowing just where he was going and reaching his goal without meandering. Crozier was about to step down when Burlingame rose.

"I wish to ask a few questions," he said.

Crozier bowed and turned, again grasping the rail of the witness-box with one hand, while with an air of both cogitation and suspense he stroked his chin with the long fingers of the other hand.

"What is your name?" asked Burlingame in a tone a little louder than he had used hitherto in the trial, indeed even louder than lawyers generally use when they want to bully a witness. In this case it was as though he wished to summon and startle the attention of the court.

For a second Crozier's fingers caught his chin almost spasmodically. The real meaning of the question, what lay behind it, flashed to his mind. He saw in lightning illumination the course Burlingame meant to pursue. For a moment his heart seemed to stand still, and he turned slightly pale, but the blue of his eyes took on a new steely look—a look also of striking watchfulness, as of an animal conscious of its danger, yet conscious, too, of its power when at bay.

"What is your name?" Burlingame asked again in a somewhat louder tone, and turned to look at the jury, as if bidding them note the hesitation of the witness, though, indeed, the waiting was so slight that none but a trickster like Burlingame would have taken advantage of it, and only then when there was much behind.

For a moment longer Crozier remained silent, getting strength, as it were, and saying to himself, "What does he know?" and then, with a composed look of inquiry at the judge, who appeared to take no notice, he said: "I have already, in evidence, given my name to the court."

"Witness, what is your name?" again almost shouted the lawyer with a note of indignation in his voice, as though here was a dangerous fellow committing a misdemeanor in their very presence. He spread out his hands to the jury, as though bidding them observe, if they would, this witness hesitating in answer to a simple, primary question—a witness who had just sworn a man's life away!

"What is your name?"

"James Gathorne Kerry, as I have already given it to the court."

"Where do you live?"

"In Askatoon, as I have already said in evidence; and if it is necessary to give my domicile, I live at the house of Mrs. Tyndall Tynan, Pearl Street—as you know."

The tone in which he uttered the last few words was such that even the judge pricked up his ears.

A look of hatred came into the decadent but able lawyer's face.

"Where do you live when you are at home?"

"The house of Mrs. Tynan is the only home I have at present."

He was outwitting the pursuer so far, but it only gained him time, as he knew; and he knew also that no suggestive hint concerning the episode at Mrs. Tynan's, when Burlingame was asked to leave her house, would be of any avail now.

"Where were you born?"

"In Ireland."

"What part of Ireland?"

"County Kerry."

"What place—what town or city or village in County Kerry?"

"In neither."

"What house, then — what estate?" Burlingame was more than nettled; and he sharpened his sword.

"The estate of Castlegarry."

"What was your name in Ireland?"

In the short silence that followed the quick drawn breath of many excited and some agitated people could be heard. Among the latter were Mrs. Tynan and her daughter and Malachi Deely; among those who held their breath in suspense were John Sibley, Studd Bradley, the financier, and the Young Doctor. The swish of a skirt seemed ridiculously loud in the hush, and the scratching of the judge's quill pen was noisily irritating.

"My name in Ireland was James Shiel Gathorne Crozier, commonly called Shiel Crozier," came the calm reply from the witness-box.

"James Shiel Gathorne Crozier in Ireland, but James Gathorne Kerry here!" Burlingame turned to the jury significantly. "What other name have you been known by in or out of Ireland?" he added sharply to Crozier.

"No other name so far as I know."

"No other name so far as you know," repeated the lawyer in a sarcastic tone intended to impress the court.

"Who was your father?"

"John Gathorne Crozier."

"Any title?"

"He was a baronet."

"What was his business?"

"He had no profession, though he had business, of course."

"Ah, he lived by his wits?"

"No, he was not a lawyer! I have said he had no profession. He lived on his money on his estate."

The judge waved down the laughter at Burlingame's expense.

"In official documents what was his description?" snarled Burlingame.

"'Gentleman' was his designation in official documents."

"You, then, were the son of a gentleman?" There was a hateful suggestion in the tone.

"I was."

"A legitimate son?"

Nothing in Crozier's face showed what he felt, except his eyes, and they had a look in them which might well have made his questioner shrink. He turned calmly to the judge.

"Your honor, does this bear upon the case? Must I answer this legal libertine?"

At the word *libertine,* the judge, the whole court, and the audience started; but it was presently clear the witness meant that the questioner was abusing his legal privileges, though the people present interpreted it another way and quite rightly.

The reply of the judge was in favor of the lawyer.

"I do not quite see the full significance of the line of defense, but I think I must allow the question," was the judge's gentle and reluctant reply, for he was greatly impressed by this witness, by his transparent honesty and straightforwardness.

"Were you a legitimate son of John Gathorne Crozier and his wife?" asked Burlingame.

"Yes, a legitimate son," answered Crozier in an even voice.

"Is John Gathorne Crozier still living?"

"I said that gentleman *was* his designation in official documents. I supposed that would convey the fact that he was not living, but I see you do not quickly grasp a point."

Burlingame was stung by the laughter in the court and ventured a *riposte.*

"But is once a gentleman always a gentleman an infallible rule?"

"I suppose not; I did not mean to convey that; but once a rogue always a bad lawyer holds good in every country," was Crozier's comment in a low, quiet voice which stirred, startled, and amused the audience again.

"I must ask counsel to put questions which have some relevance even to his own line of defense," remarked the judge sternly. "This is not a corner grocery."

Burlingame bowed. He had had a facer, but he had also shown the witness to have been living under an assumed name. That was a good start. He hoped to add to the discredit. He had absolutely no knowledge of Crozier's origin and past; but he was in a position to find it out if Crozier told the truth on oath, and he was sure he would.

"IS ONCE A GENTLEMAN ALWAYS A GENTLEMAN AN INFALLIBLE RULE?"

"Where was your domicile in the old country?" Burlingame asked.

"In County Kerry—with a flat in London."

"An estate in County Kerry?"

"A house and two thousand acres."

"Is it your property still?"

"It is not."

"You sold it?"

"No."

"If you did not sell, how is it that you do not own it?"

"It was sold for me—in spite of me."

The judge smiled, the people smiled, the jury smiled. Truly, though a life-history was being exposed with incredible slowness —"like pulling teeth," as the Young Doctor said—it was being touched off with laughter.

"You were in debt?"

"Quite."

"How did you get into debt?"

"By spending more than my income."

If Askatoon had been proud of its legal talent in the past it had now reason for revising its opinion. Burlingame was frittering away the effect of his inquiry by elaboration of details. What he gained by the main startling fact he lost in the details by which the witness scored. He asked another main question.

"Why did you leave Ireland?"

"To make money."

"You couldn't do it there?"

"They were too many for me over there, so I thought I'd come here," slyly answered Crozier, and with a grave face; at which the solemn scene of a prisoner being tried for his life was shaken by a broad smiling, which in some cases became laughter haughtily suppressed by the court attendant.

"Have you made money here?"

"A little—with expectations."

"What was your income in Ireland?"

"It began with three thousand pounds—"

"Fifteen thousand dollars about?"

"About that—about a lawyer's fee for one whisper to a client less than that. It began with that and ended with nothing."

"Then you escaped?"

"From creditors, lawyers, and other such? No, I found you here."

The judge intervened again almost harshly on the laughter of the court, with the remark that a man was being tried for his life; that ribaldry was out of place, and that, unless the course pursued by the counsel was to discredit the reliability of the character of the witness, the examination was in excess of the privilege of counsel.

"Your honor has rightly apprehended what my purpose is," Burlingame said deprecatingly. He then turned to Crozier again, and his voice rose as it did when he began the examination. It was as though he was starting all over again.

"What was it compelled (he was boldly venturing) you to leave Ireland at last? What was the incident which drove you out from the land where you were born; from being the owner of two thousand acres—"

"Partly bog," interposed Crozier.

"—From being the owner of two thousand acres to becoming a kind of head-groom on a ranch. What was the cause of your flight?"

"Flight! I came in one of the steamers of the Company for which your firm are the agents—eleven days it took to come from Glasgow to Quebec."

Again the court rippled, again the attendant intervened threateningly.

Burlingame was nonplused this time, but he gathered himself together.

"What was the process of law which forced you to leave your own land?"

"None at all."

"What were your debts when you left?"

"None at all."

"How much was the last debt you paid?"

"Two thousand five hundred pounds."

"What was its nature?"

"It was a debt of honor—do you understand?"

The subtle challenge of the voice, the sarcasm was not lost. Again there was a struggle on the part of the audience not to laugh outright, and so be driven from the court as had been threatened.

The judge interposed again with the remark, not very severe in tone, that the witness was not in the box to ask questions, but to answer them. At the same time he must remind counsel that the examination must discontinue unless something more relevant immediately appeared in the evidence.

There was silence again for a moment, and even Crozier himself seemed to steel himself for a question he felt was coming.

"Are you married or single?" asked Burlingame, and he did not need to raise his voice to summon the interest of the court.

"I was married."

One person in the audience nearly cried out. It was Kitty Tynan. She had never allowed herself to think of that, but even if she had, what difference could it make whether he was married or single, since he was out of her star?

"Are you not married now?"

"I do not know."

"You mean you do not know if you have been divorced?"

"No."

"You mean your wife is dead?"

"No."

"What do you mean? That you do not know whether your wife is living or dead?"

"Quite so."

"Have you heard from her since you saw her last?"

"I had one letter."

Kitty Tynan thought of the unopened letter in a woman's handwriting in the green-baize desk in her mother's house.

"No more?"

"No more."

"Are we to understand that you do not know whether your wife is living or dead?"

"I have no information that she is dead."

"Why did you leave her?"

"I have not said that I left her. Primarily I left Ireland."

"Assuming that she is alive, your wife will not live with you?"

"Ah, what information have you to that effect?"

The judge informed Crozier that he must not ask questions of counsel.

"Why is she not with you here?"

"As you said, I am only picking up a living here, and even the passage by your own second-class steamship line is expensive!"

The judge suppressed a smile. He greatly liked the witness.

"Do you deny that you parted from your wife in anger?"

"When I am asked that question I will try to answer it. Meanwhile I do not deny what has not been put before me in the usual way."

Here the judge sternly rebuked the counsel, who ventured upon one last question.

"Have you any children?"

"None."

"Has your brother, who inherited, any children?"

"None that I know of."

"Are you the heir-presumptive to the baronetcy?"

"I am."

"Yet your wife will not live with you?"

"Call Mrs. Crozier as a witness and see. Meanwhile I am not upon my trial."

He turned to the judge, who promptly called upon Burlingame to conclude his examination.

Burlingame asked two questions more. "Why did you change your name when you came here?"

"I wanted to obliterate myself."

"I put it to you, that what you want is to avoid the outraged law of your own country."

"No—I want to avoid the outrageous lawyers of yours."

Again there was a pause in the proceedings, and on a protest from the crown attorney the judge put an end to the cross-examination with the solemn reminder to a hushed assembly that a man was being tried for his life, and that the present proceedings were a lamentable reflection on the levity of human nature—at least of human nature in Askatoon. Turning with friendly scrutiny to Crozier, he said:

"In the early stage of his examination the witness informed the court that he had made a heavy loss through a debt of honor immediately before leaving England. Will he say in which way he incurred the obligation? Are we to assume that it was through gambling—card-playing, or other games of chance?"

"Through backing the wrong horse," was Crozier's instant reply.

"That phrase is often applied to mining or other unreal flights for fortune," said the judge with a dry smile.

"This was a real horse on a real flight to the winning-post," added Crozier with a quirk at the corner of his mouth.

"Honest contest with man or horse is no crime, but it is tragedy to stake all on the contest and lose," was the judge's grave and pedagogic comment. "We shall now hear from the counsel for the defense his reason for conducting his cross-examination on such unusual lines. Latitude of this kind is only permissible if it opens up any weakness in the case against the prisoner."

The judge thus did Burlingame a good turn as well as Crozier, by creating an atmosphere of gravity, even of tragedy, in which Burlingame could make his speech in defense of the prisoner.

Burlingame started hesitatingly, got into his stride, assembled the points of his defense with the skill of which he really was capable, when he was not under the influence of morphia, in which he occasionally indulged as a kind of antidote to less occasional bouts of drink. He made a strong appeal for acquittal, but if not complete acquittal, then manslaughter. He showed that the only real evidence which could convict his man of murder was that of the witness Crozier. If he had been content to discredit evidence of the witness by an adroit but guarded misuse of the facts he had brought out regarding Crozier's past; to emphasize the fact that he was living under an assumed name and that his *bona fides* was doubtful, he might have impressed the jury to some slight degree. He could not, however, control the malice he felt, and he was smarting from Crozier's retorts. He had a vanity easily lacerated, and he was now too savage to abate the ferocity of his forensic attack. He sat down, however, with a sure sense of failure. Every orator knows when he is beating the air, even when his audience is quiet and apparently attentive.

The crown attorney was a man of the quietest method and of cold, unforensic logic. He had a deadly precision of speech, a very remarkable memory, and a great power of organizing and assembling his facts. There was little left of Burlingame's appeal when he sat down. He declared that to discredit Crozier's evidence because he chose to use another name than his own, because he was parted from his wife, because he left England practically penniless to earn an honest living—no one had shown it was not—was the last resort of legal desperation. It was an indefensible thing to endeavor to create prejudice against a man because of his own evidence given with great frankness. Not one single word of evidence had the defense brought to discredit Crozier, save by Crozier's own word of mouth, and if Crozier had cared to commit perjury the defense could not have proved him guilty of it. Even if Crozier had not told the truth as it was, counsel for the defense were incapable of convicting him of falsehood. But even if Crozier was a perjurer, justice demanded that his evidence should be weighed as truth from its own inherent probability and supported by surrounding facts. In a long experience he had never seen animus against a witness so recklessly exhibited as by counsel in this case.

The judge was not quite so severe in his summing up, but he did say of Crozier that his direct replies to Burlingame's questions, intended to prejudice him in the eyes of the community into which he had come a stranger, bore undoubted evidence of truth; for if he had chosen to say what might have saved him from the suspicions, ill or well founded of his present fellow citizens, he might have done so with impunity, save for the reproach of his own conscience. On the whole the judge summed up powerfully against the prisoner Logan, with the result that the jury were not out for more than a half-hour. Their verdict was guilty of murder.

In the scene which followed, Crozier dropped his head into his hand and sat immovable and overcome as the judge put on the black cap and delivered sentence. When the prisoner left the dock, and the crowd began to disperse, satisfied that justice had been done—save in that small circle where the Macmahons were supreme—Crozier rose with other witnesses to leave. As he looked ahead of him the first face he say was that of Kitty Tynan, and something in it startled him. Where had he seen that look before? Yes, he remembered. It was when he was twenty-one and had been sent away to Algiers because he was falling in love with a farmer's daughter. As he drove down a lane with his father towards the railway station, those long years ago, he had seen the girl's face looking at him from the window of a laborer's cottage at the crossroads; and its stupefied pain and disappointment haunted him for many years, even after the girl had married and gone to live in Scotland—that place of torment for an Irish person.

The look in Kitty Tynan's face reminded him of that farmer's lass in his boyhood's history. He was to blame then—was he to blame now? Certainly not consciously, certainly not by any intended word or act. Now he met her eyes and smiled at her, not gaily, not gravely, but with a kind of whimsical helplessness; for she was the first to remind him that he was leaving the court-room in a different position (if not a different man) from that in which he entered it. He had entered the court-room as James Gathorne Kerry, and he was leaving it as Shiel Crozier; and somehow James Gathorne Kerry had always been to himself a different man from Shiel Crozier, with different views, different feelings, if not different characteristics.

He saw faces turned to him, a few with intense curiosity, fewer still with a little furtiveness, some with amusement, and many with unmistakable approval; for one thing was clear, if his own evidence was correct: he was the son of a baronet, he was heir-presumptive to a baronetcy, and he had scored off Augustus Burlingame in a way which delighted a naturally humorous people. He noted, however, that the nod which Studd Bradley, the financier, gave him had in it an enigmatic something which puzzled him. Surely Bradley could not be prejudiced against him because of the evidence he had given. There was nothing criminal in living under an assumed name, which, anyhow, was his own name in three-fourths of it, and in the other part was the name of the county where he was born.

"Divils me own, I told you he was up among the dukes," said Malachi Deely to John Sibley as they came out. "And he's from me own county, and I know the name well enough; an' a damn good name it is. The bulls of Castlegarry was famous in the south of Ireland."

"I've a warm spot for him. I was right, you see. Backing horses ruined him," said Sibley in reply; and he looked at Crozier admiringly.

There is the communion of saints, but nearer and dearer is the communion of sinners; for a common danger is their bond, and that is even more than a common hope.

CHAPTER IV

"STRENGTH SHALL BE GIVEN THEE"

On the evening of the day of the trial, Mrs. Tynan, having fixed the new blind to the window of Shiel Crozier's room, which was on the ground floor front, was lowering and raising it to see if it worked properly, when out in the moonlit street she saw a wagon approaching her house surrounded and followed by obviously excited men. Once before she had seen just such a group nearing her door. That was when her husband was brought home to die in her arms. She had a sudden conviction, as, holding the blind in her hand, she looked out into the night, that again tragedy was to cross her threshold. Standing for an instant under the fascination of terror, she recovered herself with a shiver, and, stepping down from the chair where she had been fixing the blind, with the instinct of real woman, she ran to the bed of the room where she was and made it ready. Why did she feel that it was Shiel Crozier's bed which should be made ready? Or did she not feel it? Was it only a dazed, automatic act, not connected with the person who was to lie in the bed? Was it that she was a fatalist, and that the habit of trouble and sorrow was so common to her that she assumed naturally that whatever this tragedy was it must touch the man nearest to her—and certainly Shiel Crozier was far nearer than Jesse Bulrush. Quite apart from wealth or position, personality plays a part more powerful than all else in the eyes of every woman who has a soul which has substance enough to exist at all. Such men as Crozier have compensations for "whate'er they lack." It never occurred to Mrs. Tynan to go to Jesse Bulrush's room or the room of middle-aged, comely Nurse Egan.

She did the instinctive thing, as did the woman who sent a man a rope as a gift, on the ground that the fortune in his hand said that he was born not to be drowned.

Mrs. Tynan's instinct was right. By the time she had flashed the bed into shape, got a bowl of water ready, lighted a lamp, and drawn the bed out from the wall, there was a knocking at the door. In a moment she had opened it, and was faced by John Sibley, whose hat was off as though he was in the presence of death. This gave her a shock, and her eyes strove painfully to see the figure which was being borne feet foremost over her threshold.

THE FIRST FACE HE SAW WAS THAT OF KITTY TYNAN AND SOMETHING IN IT STARTLED HIM

"It's Mr. Crozier?" she asked.

"He was shot coming home here — by the Macmahon mob, I guess," returned Sibley huskily.

"Is—is he dead?" she asked tremblingly.

"No. Hurt bad."

"The kindest man—it'd break Kitty's heart—and mine," she added hastily, for she might be misunderstood; and John Sibley had shown unmistakable signs of interest in her daughter.

"Where's the Young Doctor?" she asked, catching sight of Crozier's face as they laid him on the bed.

"He's done the first aid, and he's off getting what's needed for the operation. He'll be here in a minute or so," said a banker who, a few days before, had refused Crozier credit.

"Gently, gently—don't do it that way," said Mrs. Tynan in sharp reproof as they began to take off Crozier's clothes.

"Are you going to stay while we do it?" asked a maker of mineral waters, who whined at the Methodist class-meetings of a soul saved and roared at his employees like a soul damned.

"Oh, don't be a fool!" was the impatient reply. "I've a grown-up girl and I've had a husband. Don't pull at his vest like that. Go away. You don't know how. I've had experience—my husband . . . There, wait till I cut it away with the scissors. Cover him with the quilt.

Now, then, catch hold of his trousers under the quilt, and draw them off slowly. There, lift him—now slowly off. There you are—and nothing to shock the modesty of a grown-up woman or any other when a life's at stake. What does the Young Doctor say?"

"Hush! He's coming to," interposed the banker.

It was as though the quiet that followed the removal of his clothes and the touch of Mrs. Tynan's hand on his head had called Crozier back from unconsciousness.

The first face he saw was that of the banker. In spite of the loss of blood and his pitiable condition, a whimsical expression came to his eyes. "Lucky for you you didn't lend me the money," he said with a voice which had but a shadow of its old fulness.

The banker shook his head. "I'm not thinking of that, Mr. Crozier," he said. "God knows, I'm not!"

Crozier caught sight of Mrs. Tynan. "It's hard on you to have me brought here," he murmured as she took his hand.

"Not so hard as if they hadn't," she replied. "That's what a home's for—not just a place for eating and drinking and sleeping."

"It wasn't part of the bargain," he said huskily and weakly.

"It was *my* part of the bargain," she responded.

"Here's Kitty," said the maker of mineral waters, as there was the swish of a skirt at the door.

"Who are you calling 'Kitty'?" asked the girl herself indignantly, as they motioned her back from the bedside. "There's too many people here," she added abruptly to her mother. "We can take care of him"—she jerked her head towards the bed. "We don't want any help except—except from John Sibley here, if he will stay, and you, too," she added to the banker.

She had not yet looked at the figure on the bed. She felt she could not do so while all these people were in the room. She needed time to adjust herself to the situation. It was as though she was the authority in the household and took control even of her mother. Mrs. Tynan understood. She had a great belief in her daughter and admired her cleverness, and she was always ready to be ruled by her; it was like being "bossed" by the man she had lost. Besides, she had a true instinct concerning Kitty's feelings at this moment, and she wished to humor her.

"Yes, you'd all better go," Mrs. Tynan said. "He wants all the air he can get, and I can't make things ready with you all in the room. Go outdoors for a while, anyway. It's summer and you'll not take cold! The Young Doctor has work to do, and my girl and I and these two will help him plenty"—she motioned to the banker and the gambling farmer.

In a moment the room was cleared of all save the four and Crozier, who knew that upon the coming operation depended his life. He had been conscious when the Young Doctor said this was so, and he was thinking as he lay there watching these two women out of his nearly closed eyes that he would like to be back in County Kerry at Castlegarry with the girl he had married and had left without a good-by near five years gone. If he had to die he would like to die at home; and that could not be.

Kitty had the courage to turn towards him now. As she caught sight of his face for the first time—she had so far kept her head turned away—she turned very pale. Then, suddenly, she gathered herself together with a courage worthy of the most primitive savage or the highest aristocrat—like those who went to the guillotine at the word of Danton. Going over to the bed she took the limp hand lying on the coverlet.

"Cheer up, soldier," she said in the colloquialism her father often used, and she smiled at Crozier a great-hearted, helpful smile.

"You are a brick of bricks, Kitty Tynan," he whispered, and smiled.

"Here comes the Young Doctor," said Mrs. Tynan as the door opened unceremoniously.

"Well, I have to take an excursion," Crozier said, "and I mayn't come back. If I don't, *au revoir,* Kitty."

"You are coming back, all right," she answered firmly. "It'll take more than a horse-thief's bullet to kill you. You've got to come back. You're as tough as nails. And I'll hold your hand all through it—yes, I will!" she added to the Young Doctor, who had patted her shoulder and told her to go to another room.

" I'm going to help you, doctor-man, if you please," she said, as he turned to the box of instruments which his assistant held.

" There's another—one of my colleagues—coming, I hope," the Young Doctor replied.

" That's all right, but I am staying to see Mr. Crozier through. I said I'd hold his hand, and I'm going to do it," she added firmly.

" Very well; put on a big apron, and see that you go through with us if you start. No nonsense."

" There'll be no nonsense from me," she answered quietly.

" I want the bed in the middle of the room," the Young Doctor said, and the others gently moved it.

CHAPTER V

A STORY TO BE TOLD

A GREAT surgeon said a few years ago that he was never nervous when performing an operation, though there was sometimes a moment when every resource of character, skill, and brain came into play. That was when, having diagnosed correctly and operated, a new and unexpected seat of trouble and peril was exposed, and instant action had to be taken. The great man naturally rose to the situation and dealt with it coolly and implacably; but he paid the price afterwards in his sleep when, night after night, he performed the operation over and over again with the same strain on his subconscious self.

So it was with Kitty Tynan in her small way. She had insisted on being allowed to help at the operation, and the Young Doctor, who had a good knowledge of life and knew the stuff in her, consented; and so far as the operation was concerned she justified his faith in her. When the banker had to leave the room at the sight of the carnage, she remained, and she and John Sibley were as cool as the Young Doctor and his fellow-anatomist, till it was all over, and Shiel Crozier was started again on a safe journey back to health. Then a thing which would have been amusing if it had not been so deeply human happened. She and John Sibley went out of the house together into the moonlit night, and the reaction seized them both at the same moment. She gave a gulp and burst into tears, and he, though as tall as Crozier, also broke down, and they sat on the stump of a tree together, her hand in his, and cried like two children.

" Never since I was a little runt—did I—never cried in thirty years—and here I am—leaking like a pail!"

Thus spoke John Sibley in gasps and squeezing Kitty's hand all the time unconsciously, but spontaneously, and as part of what he felt. He would not, however, have dared to hold her hand on any other occasion, while always wanting to hold it, and wanting her also to share his varied and not wholly reputed, though far from precarious, existence. He had never got so far as to tell her that; but if she had sense and understanding she would realize after to-night what he had in his mind.

She, feeling her arm thrill with the magnetism of his very vital palm, had her turn at explanation of the weakness. " I wouldn't have broke down myself—it was all your fault," she said. " I saw it—yes—in your face as we left the house. I'm so glad it's over safe—no one belonging to him here, and not knowing if he'd wake up alive or not—I just was swamped!"

He took up the misty excuse and explanation. " I had a feeling for him from the start; and then that Logan Trial to-day, and the way he talked out straight, and told the truth to shame the devil—it's what does a man good! And going bung over a horse-race—that's what got me, too, where I was young and tender. Swatted that Burlingame every time—one eye, two eyes all black, teeth out, nose flattened—called him an 'outrageous lawyer'—my, that last clip was a good one! You bet he's a sport—Crozier!"

Kitty nodded eagerly while still wiping her red eyes. " He made the judge smile—I saw it, not ten minutes before his honor put on the black cap. You couldn't have believed it, if you hadn't seen it—Here, let go my hand," she added, suddenly conscious of the enormity John Sibley was committing by squeezing it recklessly now.

It is perfectly true that she did not quite realize that he had taken her hand—that *he* had taken her hand. She was conscious in a nice, sympathetic way that her hand had been taken, but it was lost in the abstraction of her emotion. She only realized how far she had committed herself when his demonstrations became so fervid that her mind must recognize as well as her senses.

"Oh, here, let it go quick!" she added—"and not because mother's coming, either," she added as the door opened and her mother came out—not to spy, not to reproach her daughter for sitting with a man in the moonlight at ten o'clock at night, but—good, practical, old-fashioned soul—to bring them each a cup of beef-tea.

"Here, you two," she said, as she hurried to them. "You need something after that business in there, and there isn't time to get supper ready. It's as good for you as supper, anyway. It's made of the best beef this side of the sea. I don't believe in underfeeding. Nothing's too good to swallow."

She watched them sip the tea slowly like two school-children.

"And when you've drunk it you must go right to bed, Kitty," she added presently. "You've had your own way, and you saw the thing through; but there's always a reaction, and you'll pay for it. It wasn't fit work for a girl of your age; but I'm proud of your nerve, and I'm glad you showed those doctors what you can do. You've got your father's brains and my grit," she added with a sigh of satisfaction. "Come along—bed now, Kitty. If you get too tired you'll have bad dreams."

Perhaps she was too tired. In any case she had dreams. Just as the great surgeon performed his operation over and over in his sleep, so Kitty Tynan, through long hours that night, and for many nights afterward, saw the swift knives, helped to staunch the blood, held the basin, disinfected the instruments which had made an attack on the man of men in her eyes, and saw the wound stitched up—the last act of the business before the Young Doctor turned to her and said, "You'll do wherever you're put in life, Miss Kitty Tynan. You're a great girl—and now run away and get some fresh air and forget all about it."

Forget all about it! So the Young Doctor knew what happened after a terrific experience like that! In truth, he knew only too well. Great surgeons do surgery only and have innumerable operations to give them skill; but a country physician and surgeon must be a sane being to keep his nerve when called on to use the knife, and he must have a more than usual gift for such business. That is what the Young Doctor had; but he knew that it was not easy to forget those scenes in which man carved the body of fellow man, laying bare the very vitals of existence, seeing "the wheels go round."

It haunted Kitty Tynan in the nighttime, and perhaps it was that which toned down a little the color of her face—the kind of difference of coloring there is between natural gold and 14-carat. But in the daytime she was quite happy, and though there was haunting, it was Shiel Crozier who, first helpless, then convalescent, was haunted by her presence. It gave him pleasure, but it was a pleasure which brought pain. He was not so blind that he hadn't caught at her romance in which he was the central figure—a romance which had not vanished since the day he declared in the court-room that he was married — or had been married. Kitty's eyes told their own story, and it made him very uneasy and remorseful. Yet he could not remember when, even for an instant, he had played with her. She had always seemed part of a simple family life for which he and Jesse Bulrush and her mother and the nurse — Nurse Egan — were responsible. What a blessing Nurse Egan had been! Otherwise all the nursing would have been performed by Kitty and her mother, and it might well have broken them down, for they were well determined to nurse him themselves.

When, however, Nurse Egan came back two days after the operation was performed they included her in the responsibility, as one of the family, and as she had no other important case on at the time, fortunately she could give Crozier her almost undivided attention. She had been at first disposed to keep Kitty out of the sick-chamber, as no place for a girl, but she soon abandoned that position, for Kitty was not the girl ever to think of impropriety. Rather primitive and of a before-the-flood nature she was, but she had not the faintest vulgar strain in her. Her mind was essentially pure, and nothing material in her had been awakened.

Her greatest joy was to do the many things for the patient which a nurse must do—prepare his food, give him drink, adjust his pillows, bathe his face and hands, take his temperature; and on his part he tried hard to disguise from her the apprehension he felt, and to avoid any hint by word or look that he saw anything save the actions of a kind heart. True, her views as to what was proper and what was improper might possibly be on a different plane from his own. For instance, he had seen girls in her class in the West kiss young men freely—men whom they never expected to marry and had no thought of marrying; and that was not the custom of his own class in his home-country.

As he got well slowly, and life opened out before him again, he felt that he had to pursue a new course, and in that course he must take account of Kitty Tynan, though he could not decide how. He had a deep confidence in the Young Doctor, in his judgment and in his character; and it was almost inevitable that he should tell his life-story to the man whose skill had saved him from death in a strange land, with all undone he wanted to do ere he returned to a land which was not strange.

The thing happened, as such things do happen, in a quite natural way one day when he and the Young Doctor were discussing the probable verdict against the man who had shot him—the trial was to come on soon, and once again Augustus Burlingame was to be counsel for the defense; and once again Crozier would have to appear in a witness-box.

" I think you ought to know, Crozier, that, in view of the trial, Burlingame has written to a firm of lawyers in Kerry to secure full information about your past," the Young Doctor said.

Crozier gave one of those little jerks of the head characteristic of him and said, " Why, of course, I knew he would do that after I gave my evidence in the Logan Trial." He raised himself on his elbow. " I owe you a great deal," he added feelingly, " and I can't repay you in cash or kindness for what you have done; but it is due you to tell you my whole story, and that is what I propose to do now."

" If you think—"

" I do think; and also I want both Mrs. Tynan and her daughter to hear my story. Better, truer friends a man could not have; and I want them to know the worst there is and the best there is, if there is any best. They and you have trusted me, been too good to me, and what I said at the trial is not enough. I want to do what I've never done—tell everything. It will do me good; and perhaps as I tell it I'll see myself and everything else in a truer light than I've yet seen it all."

" You are sure you want Mrs. Tynan and her daughter to hear?"

" Absolutely sure."

" They are not in your rank in life, you know."

" They are my friends, and I owe them more than I can say. There is nothing they cannot or should not hear. I can say that at least."

" Shall I ask them to come?"

" Yes. Give me a swig of water first. It won't be easy, but—"

He held out his hand and the Young Doctor grasped it.

Suddenly the latter said: " You are sure you will not be sorry? You are sure it is not a mood of the moment due to physical weakness?"

" Quite sure. I determined on it the day I was shot—and before I was shot."

" All right." The Young Doctor disappeared.

CHAPTER VI

" HERE ENDETH THE FIRST LESSON "

The stillness of a summer's day in Prairie Land has all the characteristics of music. That is not so paradoxical as it seems. The effect of some music is to produce a divine quiescence of the senses, a suspension of motion and aggressive life, to reduce existence to mere pulsation. It was this kind of feeling which pervaded that region of sentient being when Shiel Crozier told his story. The sounds that

PERHAPS THE TALE WAS THE MORE IMPRESSIVE BECAUSE OF CROZIER'S DEEP BARYTONE VOICE

sprinkled the general stillness were in themselves sleepy notes of the pervasive music of somnolent nature—the sough of the pine at the door, the murmur of insect life, the low, thudding beat of the steam-thrasher out of sight hard by, the purring of the cat in the arms of Kitty Tynan as, with fascinated eyes, she listened to a man tell the tale of a life as distant from that which she lived as she was from Eve.

She felt more awed than curious as the tale went on; it even seemed to her she was listening to a theme beyond her sphere, as though she were an eavesdropper at the curtains of a secret ceremonial. Once or twice she looked at her mother and at the Young Doctor, as though to reassure herself that she was not a vulgar intruder. It was far more impressive to her and to the Young Doctor, too, than the scene at the Logan Trial when a man was sentenced to death. It was strangely magnetic, this tale of a man's existence; and the clock which sounded so loud on the mantelpiece, as it mechanically ticked off the time, seemed only part of some mysterious machinery of life. Once a dove swept down upon the window-sill, and, peering in, filled one of the pauses in the recital with its deep contralto note, and then fled like a small blue cloud into the wide (and as it seemed) everlasting space beyond the doorway.

There was nothing at all between themselves and the far sky-line save little clumps of trees here and there, little clusters of buildings and houses — no visible animal life. Everything conspired to give a dignity in keeping with the drama of failure being unfolded in the commonplace home of the widow Tynan. Yet the home, too, had its dignity. The engineer father had tastes, and he had insisted on plain, unfigured curtains and wall-paper and carpets, when carpets were used; and though his wife had at first protested against the unfigured carpets as more difficult to keep clean and as showing the dirt too easily, she had come to like the one-color scheme, and in that respect her home had an individuality rare in her surroundings.

That was why Kitty Tynan had always a good background; for what her bright coloring would have been in the midst of gaudy, cheap chintzes and "axminsters" such as abounded in Askatoon, is better left to the imagination. It was not therefore, in sordid, mean, or incongruous surroundings that Crozier told his tale; as would no doubt have been arranged by a dramatist, if he had had the making of the story and the setting of it; and if it were not a true tale given just as it happened, as every one in Askatoon now knows.

Perhaps the tale was the more impressive because of Crozier's deep barytone voice, capable, as it was, of much modulation, yet, except when he was greatly excited, preserving a monotone like the note of a violin when the mute is on the strings.

This was his tale:—

" Well, to begin with, I was born at Castlegarry, in County Kerry—you know the main facts from what I said in court. As a boy I wasn't so bad a sort. I had one peculiarity. I always wanted ' to have something on,' as John Sibley would say. No matter what it was, I must have something on it. And I was very lucky—worse luck!"

They all laughed at the bull. " I feel at home at once," murmured the Young Doctor, for he had come from near Enniskillen years agone, and there is not so much difference between Enniskillen and Kerry when it comes to Irish bulls.

" Worse luck, it was," continued Crozier, " because it made me confident of always winning, particularly as I gained in confidence. It's hard to say how early I began to believe that I could see things that were going to happen. By the hour I used to shake the dice on the billiard-table at Castlegarry, trying to see with my eyes shut the numbers that were to come up. Of course now and then I saw the right numbers; and it deepened the conviction that if I cultivated the gift I'd be able to be right nearly every time. When I went to a horse-race I used to fasten my mind on the signal, and tried to see beforehand the number of the winner. Again sometimes I was very right indeed, and that deepened my confidence in myself. I was always at it. I'd try and guess—try and *see*—the number of the hymn which was on the paper in the vicar's hand before he gave it out, and I would bet with myself on it. I would bet with myself or with anybody available on any conceivable thing—the minutes late a train would be, the pints of milk a cow would give, the people who would be at the hunt breakfast, the babies that would be christened on a Sunday, the number of eyes in a peck of raw potatoes. I was out against the universe. But it wasn't serious at all—just a boy's mania—till one day my father met me in London when I came down from Oxford, and took me to Brooks's Club in St. James's Street. There was the thing that finished me. I was twenty-one, and restless-minded, and with eyes wide open.

" Well, he took me to Brooks's where I was to become a member, and after a little while he left me to go and have a long powwow with the committee — he was a member of it. He told me quite needlessly to make myself at home, and I did so as soon as his back was turned. Almost the first thing with which I became sociable was a book which, as soon as I looked at it, had a fascination for me. The binding was very old, and the leather was worn, as you will see the leather of a pocketbook, till it looks and feels like a nice soap. That book brought me here."

He paused, and in the silence the Young Doctor pushed a glass of milk and brandy toward him. He sipped the contents. The others were in a state of tension. Kitty Tynan's eyes were fixed on him as though hypnotized, and the Young Doctor was scarcely less interested; while the widow of the departed engineer knitted harder and faster than she had ever done, and she could knit very fast, indeed.

" It was the betting-book of Brooks's, and it dated back almost to the time of the conquest of Quebec. Great men dead and gone long ago—near a hundred and fifty years ago—had put down their bets in the book, for Brooks's was then what it is now, the highest and best sporting club in the world."

Kitty Tynan's face had a curious look, for there was a club in Askatoon, and it was said that all the " sports " assembled there. She had no idea what Brooks's Club in St. James's Street would look like; but that did not matter. She supposed it must be as big as the Askatoon Court House at least.

" Bets—bets—bets by men whose names were in every history, and the names of their sons and grandsons and great-grandsons; and all betting on the oddest things as well as the most natural things in the world. Some of the bets made were as mad as the bets I made myself. Oh! ridiculous, some of them were; and then again bets on things that stirred the world to the centre, from the loss of America to the beheading of Louis XVI.

"It was strange enough to see the half-dozen lines of a bet by a marquis whose great-grandson bet on the Franco-German War, that the government which imposed the tea-tax in America would be out of power within six months; or that the French Canadians would join the colonists in what is now the United States if they revolted. This would be side by side with a bet that an heir would be born to one new-married couple before another couple. The very last bet made on the day I opened the book was that Queen Victoria would make Lord Salisbury a duke, that a certain gentleman known as S. S. could find his own door in St. James's Square blindfolded from the club, and that Corsair would win the Derby.

"For two long hours I sat forgetful of the world and all in it, while I read that record—to me the most interesting the world could offer. Every line was part of the history of the country, a part of the history of many lives, and it was all part of the ritual of the temple of the great god Chance. I was fascinated, spellbound, lost in a land of wonders. Men came and went, but silently. At last a gentleman came whose picture I had so often seen in the papers—a man as well known in the sporting world as was Chamberlain in the political world. He was dressed spectacularly, but his face oozed good-nature, though his eyes were like bright bits of coal. He bred horses, he raced this, he backed that, he laid against the other; he was one of the greatest plungers, one of the biggest figures on the turf. He had been a kind of god to me—a god in a gray frock-coat with a gray top-hat and field-glasses slung over his shoulder; or in a hunting-suit of the most picturesque kind—great pockets in a well-fitting coat, splendid striped waistcoat—well, there, I only mention this because it played so big a part in bringing me to Askatoon!

"He came up to the table where I sat in the room with the beautiful Adam's fireplace and the ceiling like an architrave of Valhalla, and said: 'Do you mind—for one minute?' and he reached out a hand for the book.

"I gave it to him, and I suppose my admiration showed in my eyes, because as he hastily wrote—what a generous scrawl it was!—he said to me, 'Haven't we met somewhere before? I seem to remember your face.'

"Great gentleman, I thought, because I knew that he knew he had never seen me before, and I was overcome by the reflection that he wished to be civil in that way to me. 'It's my father's face you remember, I should think,' I answered. 'He is a member here. I am only a visitor. I haven't been elected yet.' 'Ah, we must see to that!' he said with a smile, and laid a hand on my shoulder as though he'd known me many a year — and I only twenty-one. 'Who is your father?' he asked. When I told him he nodded. 'Yes, yes, I know him—Crozier of Castlegarry, but I knew his father much better, though he was so much older than me, and indeed your grandfather also. Look—in this book is the first bet I ever made here after my election to the club, and it was made with your grandfather. There's no age in the kingdom of sport, dear lad,' he added, laughing—'neither age nor sex nor position nor place. It's the one democratic thing in the modern world. It's a republic inside this old monarchy of ours. Look, here it is, my first bet with your grandfather—and I'm only sixty now!' He smoothed the page with his hand in a manner such as I have seen a dean do with his sermon-paper in a cathedral pulpit. 'Here it is, thirty-six years ago.' He read the bet aloud. It was on the Derby, he himself having bet that the Prince of Wales's horse would win. 'Your grandfather, dear lad,' he repeated, 'but you'll find no bets of mine with your father. He didn't inherit that strain, but your grandfather and your great-grandfather had it—sportsmen both, afraid of nothing, with big minds, great eyes for seeing, and a sense for a winner almost uncanny. Have you got it by any chance? Yes, yes, by George and by John, I see you have — you are your grandfather to a hair! His portrait is here in the club — in the next room. Have a look at it. He was only forty when it was done, and you're very like him—the cut of the jib is there.' He took my hand. 'Good-by, dear lad,' he said; 'we'll meet—yes, we'll meet often enough if you are like your grandfather. And I'll always like to see you,' he added generously.

"'I always wanted to see you,' I answered. 'I've cut your pictures out of the papers to keep them at Eton and Oxford.' He laughed in great good-humor and pride. 'So so, so so, and I am a hero—I've got one follower! Well, well, dear lad, I don't often go wrong, or anyhow I'm oftener right than wrong, and you might do worse than follow me—but no, I don't want that responsibility. Go on your own—go on your own.'

"A minute more and he was gone with a wave of the hand, and in excitement I picked up the betting-book. It almost took my breath away. He had staked a thousand pounds that the favorite of the Derby would not win the race, and that one of three outsiders would. As I sat overpowered by the magnitude of the bet the door opened, and he appeared with another man—not one with whose face I was then familiar, though as a duke and owner of great possessions, he was familiar to society. 'I've put it down,' he said. 'Sign it, if it's all in order.' This the duke did after apologizing for disturbing me. He looked at me keenly as he turned away. 'Not the most elevating literature in the library,' he said, smiling ironically. 'If you haven't got a taste for it beyond control, don't cultivate it.' He nodded kindly, and left; and again, till my father came and found me, I buried myself in that book of fate—to me. I found many entries in my grandfather's name, but not one in my father's name. I have an idea that when a vice or virtue skips one generation, it appears with increased violence or persistence in the next, for passing over my father into my defenseless breast, the spirit of sport went mad in me—or almost so. No miser ever had a more cheerful and happy hour than I had as I read the betting-book at Brooks's. That is where it all started, the train of events which brought me here.

"I became a member of Brooks's soon after I left Oxford. As some men go to the Temple, some to the Stock Exchange, some to Parliament, I went to Brooks's. It was the centre of my interest, and I took chambers in Park Place, St. James's Street, a few steps away. Here I met again constantly the great sportsman who had noticed me so kindly, and I became his follower, his disciple. I had started with him on a wave of prejudice in his favor; because that day when I read in the betting-book what he had staked against the favorite, I laid all the cash and credit I could get with his outsiders and against the favorite, and I won five hundred pounds. What he won (to my youthful eyes) was fabulous. There's no use saying what you think — you good friends, who've always done something in life—that I was a good-for-nothing creature to give myself up to the turf, to horses and jockeys, and the janissaries of sport. You must remember that for generations my family had run on a very narrow margin of succession, there seldom if ever being more than two born in any generation of the family, so that there was always enough for the younger son or daughter; and to take up a profession was not necessary for livelihood. If my mother, who was an intellectual and able woman, had lived, it's hard to tell what I should have become; for steered aright, given right ideas of what life should mean to a man, I might have become ambitious and forged ahead in one direction or another. But there it was—she died when I was ten, and there was no one to mould me. At Eton, at Oxford—well, they are not preparatory schools to the business of life. And when at twenty-four I inherited the fortune my mother left me, I had only one idea—to live the life of a sporting gentleman. I had a name as a cricketer—"

"Ah—I remember, Crozier of Lammis!" interjected the Young Doctor involuntarily. "I'm a north of Ireland man, but I remember—"

"Yes, Lammis," the sick man went on. "Castlegarry was my father's place, but my mother left me Lammis. When I got control of it, and of the securities she left, I felt my oats, as they say; and I wasn't long in making a show of courage, not to say rashness, in following my leader. He gave me luck for a time, indeed so great that I could even breed horses of my own. But the luck went against him at last, and then, of course, against me; and I began to feel that suction which, as it draws the cash out of your pocket, the credit out of your bank, seems to draw also the whole internal economy out of your body — a ghastly, empty, collapsing thing."

Mrs. Tynan gave a great sigh. She had once put two hundred dollars in a mine—on paper—and it ended in a lawsuit; and on the verdict in the lawsuit depended the two hundred dollars and more. When she read a fatal telegram to her saying that all was lost she had had that empty, collapsing feeling.

"LOOK, HERE IT IS, MY FIRST BET WITH YOUR GRANDFATHER"

Pausing for a moment in which he sipped some milk, Crozier then continued: "At last my leader died, and the see-saw of fortune began for me; and a good deal of my sound timber was sawed into logs and made into lumber to build some one else's fortune—on the turf. You never know who it is that eats up your porridge refectory! When things were balancing pretty easily, I married. It wasn't a sordid business to restore my fortunes—I'll say that for myself; but it wasn't the thing to do, for I wasn't secure in my position. I might go on the rocks; but was there ever a gambler who didn't believe that he'd pull it off in a big way next time, and that the turn of the wheel against him was only to tame his spirit? Was there ever a gambler or sportsman of my class who didn't talk about the 'law of chances,' on the basis that if red, as it were, came up three times, black stood a fair chance of coming up the fourth time? A silly enough conclusion; for on the law of chances there's no reason why red shouldn't come up three hundred times; and so I found that your run of bad luck may be so long that you cannot have a chance to recover, and are out of it before the wheel turns in your favor. I oughtn't to have married."

His voice had changed in tone, his look become most grave, there was something very like a look of awe in his face, of deprecating submission in his eyes. His fingers fussed with the rug that covered his knees.

"God help the man that's afraid of his own wife," remarked the Young Doctor to himself, not erroneously reading the expression of Crozier's face and the tone of his voice. "There's nothing so unnerving."

"No, I oughtn't to have done it," Crozier went on. "But I will say again it wasn't a sordid marriage, though she had expectations, great expectations—but not immediate, and she was a girl of great character. She was able and brilliant and splendid and far-seeing, and she knew her own mind, and was radiantly handsome."

Kitty Tynan almost sniffed. Through a whole fortnight she had, with a courage and a rightmindedness quite remarkable, fought her infatuation for this man, and as she fought she had imagined a hundred times what his wife was like. She had pictured to herself a gossamer kind of woman, delicate, and in contour like one of the fashion-plate figures she saw in the picture-papers. She had imagined her with a wide, drooping hat, with a soft-clinging gown, and a bodice like a great white handkerchief crossed on her breast, holding a basket of flowers, while a King Charles spaniel gamboled at her feet.

This was what she had imagined with a kind of awe; but the few words Crozier had said of her gave the impression of a Juno commanding and exacting, bullying, sailing on with this man of men in her wake, who was afraid of stepping on her train. Why shouldn't she think that? She was only a simple prairie girl who drew her own comparisons according to her kind and from what she knew of life. So she imagined Crozier's wife to have been a Zenobia Queen of Palmyra kind of person, who swept up the dust of the universe with her skirts, and gave no chance at all to the children of nature called Kitty, who wore skirts scarcely lower than their ankles. She almost sniffed, and she became angry, too, that a man like Crozier, who had faced the offensive Augustus Burlingame in the witness-box as he did, who took the bullet of the assassin with such courage, who broke a horse like a Mexican, who could ride like a leech on a filly's flank, should crumble up at the thought of a woman who, anyhow, couldn't be taller than Crozier himself was, and hadn't a hand like a piece of steel and the skin of an antelope. It was enough to make a cat laugh—or a woman cry with rage.

"Able and brilliant and splendid and far-seeing and radiantly handsome!" There the picture was of a high, haughty, and overbearing woman, in velvet, or brocade, or poplin—yes, something stiff and overbearing like gray poplin. Kitty looked at herself suddenly in the mirror,—the half-length mirror on the opposite wall—and she felt her hands clench and her bosom beat hard under her pretty and inexpensive calico frock, a thing for Chloe, not for Juno.

She was very angry with Crozier, for it was absurd, that look of deprecating homage, that recumbent respect in his face, that "Hush—she—is—coming" in his eyes. What a fool a man was where a woman was concerned! Here she had been fighting herself for a fortnight to conquer a useless passion for her man of all the world, fit to command an array of giants; and she saw him now almost breathless as he spoke of a great wildcat of a woman who ought to be by his side now. What sort of a woman was she anyhow, who could let him go away as he had done and live apart from her all these years, while he "slogged away"—that was the Western phrase which came to her mind—to pull himself level with things again? Her feet shuffled unevenly on the floor, and it would have been a joy to shake the invalid there with the rapt look on his face. Unable to bear the situation without some demonstration, she got to her feet and caught up the glass of brandy and milk with a little exclamation.

"Here," she said, holding the glass to his lips; "here, keep up your strength, soldier. You don't need to be afraid at a five-thousand-mile range."

The Young Doctor started, for she had said what was in his own mind, but what he would not have said for a thousand dollars. It was fortunate that Crozier was scarcely conscious of what she was saying. His mind was far away. Yet, when she took the glass from him again, he touched her arm.

"Nothing is good enough for your friends, is it?" he said.

"That wouldn't be an excuse for not getting them the best there was at hand," she answered with a little laugh, and at least the Young Doctor read the meaning of her words.

Presently Crozier, with a sigh, continued: "If I had done what my wife wanted from the start I shouldn't have been here. I'd have saved what was left of a fortune, and I'd have had a home of my own."

"Is she earning her living too?" asked Kitty softly, and Crozier did not notice the irony under the question.

"She has a home of her own," answered Crozier almost sharply, certainly with a little nervousness. "Just before the worst came to the worst she inherited her fortune—plenty of it, as I got near the end of mine. One thing after another had gone. I was mortgaged up to the eyes. I knew the money-lenders from Newry to Jewry and Jewry to Jerusalem. Then it was I promised her I'd bet no more—never again; I'd give up the turf; I'd try and start again. Down in my soul I knew I couldn't start again—not just then. But I wanted to please her. She was remarkable in her way—one of the most imposing intelligences I have ever known. So I promised. I promised I'd bet no more."

The Young Doctor caught Kitty Tynan's eyes by accident, and there was the same look of understanding in both. They both knew that here was the real tragedy of Crozier's life. If he had had less reverence for his wife, less of that obvious prostration of soul, he probably would never have come to Askatoon or have left Ireland.

"I broke my promise," he murmured. "It was a horse—well, never mind. I was as sure of Flamingo as that the sun would rise by day and set by night. It was a certainty; and it *was* a certainty. The horse could win, it would win—I had it from a sure source. My judgment was right, too. I bet heavily on Flamingo, intending it for my last fling, and to save what I had left, to get back what I had lost. I could get odds on him. It was good enough. From what I knew it was like picking up a goldmine. And I was right—right as could be. There was no chance about it. It was being out where the rain fell to get wet. It was just being present when they called the roll of the good people that God meant to be kind to. It meant so much to me. I couldn't bear to have nothing and my wife to have all. I simply couldn't stand—"

The Young Doctor met again the glance of Kitty Tynan, and there was again a new and sudden look of comprehension in the eyes of both. They began to see light where their man was concerned.

After a moment of struggle to control himself, Crozier proceeded. "It didn't seem like betting. Besides, I had planned it, that when I showed her what I had won, she would shut her eyes to the broken promise, and I'd make another and keep it ever after. I put on all the cash there was to put on—all I could raise on what I had left of my property."

He paused as though to get strength to go on. Then a look of intense excitement suddenly possessed him, and there passed over him a wave which transformed him. The naturally grave medieval face became fired, the eyes blazed, the skin shone, the mouth almost trembled with agitation. He was the dreamer, the enthusiast, the fanatic almost, with that look which the pioneer, the discoverer, the adventurer has when he sees the end of his quest.

His voice rose, vibrated. "It was a day to make you thank Heaven the world was made. Such days only come once in a while in England, but when they do come what price Arcady or Askatoon! Never had there been so big a Derby. Everybody had the fever of the place at its worst. I was happy. I meant to pouch my winnings and go straight to my wife and say '*Peccavi*,' and I should hear her say to me, 'Go and sin no more.' I was happy. The sky, the green of the fields, the still, homelike, comforting trees, the mass of glorious color, the hundreds of horses that weren't running, and the scores that were to run, sleek and long, and made like shining silk and steel, it all was like heaven on earth to me—a horse-race heaven on earth! There you have the state of my mind in those days, the kind of man I was."

He sat up straight, and he gazed straight in front of him as though he saw Epsom Downs before his eyes, as though he was watching the fateful race that bore him down. He was terribly, exhaustingly alive. Something possessed him, and he possessed his hearers.

"It was just as I said and knew—my horse, Flamingo, stretched away from the rest at Tattenham Corner and came sailing away home two lengths ahead. It was a sight to last a lifetime, and that was what I meant it to be for me. The race was all Flamingo's own, and the mob was going wild, when all of a sudden a woman—she was the widow of a racing-man gone suddenly mad—she rushed out in front of the horse, snatched at its bridle with a shrill cry, and down she came, and down Flamingo and the jockey came, a *mêlée* of crushed humanity. And that was how I lost my last two thousand five hundred pounds, as I said at the Logan Trial."

"Oh! Oh!" said Kitty Tynan, her face aflame, her eyes like topaz suns, her hands wringing. "Oh, that was—oh, poor Flamingo!" she added.

A strange smile shot into Crozier's face, and the dark passion of reminiscence fled away from his eyes. "Yes, you are right, little friend," he said. "That was the real tragedy after all. There was the horse doing his best, his most beautiful best, as though he knew so much depended on him, stretching himself with the last ounce of energy that he could summon, feeling the proud song of success in his heart—yes, he knows, he knows what he has done, none so well!—and out comes a black, hateful thing against him, and down he goes, his game over, his course run! I felt exactly what you feel, and I felt that first of all when it happened. Then I felt for myself afterward, and I felt it hard, as you can think."

The break went from his voice, but it rang with reflective, remembered misery. "I was ruined. One thing was clear to me. I would not live on my wife's money. I would not eat and drink what her money bought. No, I would not live on my wife. Her brother, a good enough impulsive lad, with a tongue of his own and too small to thrash, came to me in London the night of the race. He said his sister had been in the country—down to Epsom,—and that she bitterly resented my having broken my promise and lost all I had. He said he had never seen her so angry, and he gave me a letter from her. On her return to town she had been obliged to go away at once to see her sister taken suddenly ill. He added, with an unfeeling jibe, that he wouldn't like the reading of the letter himself. If he hadn't been such a chipmonk of a fellow I'd have wrung his neck. I put the letter—her letter—in my pocket, and next day gave my lawyer full instructions and a power of attorney. Then I went straight to Glasgow, took steamer for Canada, and here I am. That was near five years ago."

"And the letter from your wife?" asked Kitty Tynan demurely and slyly. The Young Doctor looked at Crozier, surprised at her temerity, but Crozier only smiled gently. "It is in the desk there. Bring it to me, please," he said.

In a moment Kitty was beside him with the letter. He took it, turned it over, examined it carefully as though seeing it for the first time, and laid it on his knee.

"I have never opened it," he said. "There it is, just as it was handed to me."

"You don't know what is in it?" asked Kitty in a shocked voice. "Why, it may be that—"

"Oh, yes, I know what is in it!" he replied. "Her brother's confidences were enough. I didn't want to read it. I can imagine it all."

"It's pretty cowardly," remarked Kitty.

"No, I think not. It would only hurt, and the hurting could do no good. I can *hear* what it says, and I don't want to see it."

He held the letter up to his ear whimsically. Then he handed it back to her and she replaced it in the desk.

"So, there it is, and there it is," he sighed. "You have got my story, and it's bad enough, but you can see it's not what the unwholesome Burlingame suggested."

"Burlingame — but Burlingame's beneath notice," rejoined Kitty. "Isn't he, mother?"

Mrs. Tynan nodded. Then, as though with sudden impulse, Kitty came forward to Crozier and leaned over him. The look of a mother was in her eyes. Somehow she seemed to herself twenty years older than this man with the heart of a boy, who was afraid of his own wife.

"It's time for your beef-tea, and when you've had it you must get your sleep," she said with a hovering solicitude in her voice.

"I'd like to give him a thrashing first, if you don't mind," said the Young Doctor to her.

"Please let a little good advice satisfy you," Crozier remarked ruefully. "It will seem like old times," he added rather bitterly.

"You are too young to have had 'old times,'" said Kitty with gentle scorn. "I'll like you better when you are older," she added.

"Hussy!" returned Crozier with an air of mock anger, though there was sadness in his face still.

"Naughty jade," exclaimed the Young Doctor, "you ought to be more respectful to those older than yourself."

"Oh, grandpapa!" she retorted mockingly.

CHAPTER VII

A WOMAN'S WAY TO KNOWLEDGE

THE harvest was over. The grain was cut, the prairie no longer waved like a golden sea, but the smoke of the incense of sacrifice still rose in innumerable spirals in the circle of the eye. The ground appeared bare and ill-treated, like a sheep first shorn; but yet nothing could take away from it the look of plenty, even as the fat sides of the shorn sheep invite the satisfied eye of the expert. The land now, all stubble, still looked good for anything. If bare, it did not seem starved. It was naked and unshaven; it was stripped like a boxer for the rubbing down after the fight. Not so refined and suggestive and luxurious as when it was clothed with the coat of ripe corn in the ear, it still showed the muscle and fibre of its being to no disadvantage. And overhead the joy of the prairie grew apace.

September saw the vast prairie spaces around Askatoon shorn and shriveled of its glory of ripened grain, but with a new life come into the air—sweet, stinging, vibrant life, which had the suggestion of nature recreating her vitality, inflaming itself with Edenic strength, a battery charging itself, to charge the world in turn with its force and energy. Morning gave pure elation, as though all created being must strive; noon was the pulse of existence at the top of its activity; evening was glamorous; and all the lower sky was spread with those colors which Titian stole from the joyous horizon that filled his eyes. There was in that evening light somehow just a touch of pensiveness—the triste delicacy of heliotrope, harbinger of the Indian summer soon to come, when the air would make all sensitive souls turn to the past and forget that to-morrow was all in all.

Sensitive souls, however, are not so many as to crowd each other unduly in this world, and they were not more multitudinous in Askatoon than elsewhere. Not everybody was taking joy of sunrises and losing themselves in the delicate contentment of the sunset. There were many who took it all without thought, who absorbed it unconsciously, and got something from it; though there were many others who got nothing out of it at all, save the health and comfort brought by a precious climate whose solicitous friend is the sun. These heeded it little, even though a good number of them came from the damp islands lying between the north Atlantic and the German Ocean. From Erin and England and the land o' cakes they came, had a few days of staring bright-eyed happy incredulity as to the permanency of such conditions, and then settled down to take it as it was—endless days of sunshine and stirring vivacious air—as though they had always known it and had it.

There were exceptions, and these had joy in what they saw and felt according to the measure of their temperament. Shiel Crozier saw and felt much of it, and probably the Young Doctor saw and felt it as much as any one; stray people here and there who take no part in this veracious tale, had it in greater or less degree; fat Jesse Bulrush was so sensitive to it that he, as he himself said, "almost leaked sentimentality," and Kitty Tynan had it in rare measure. She was beating with life, as a bird drunken with the air's sweetness sings itself into an abandonment of motion.

Before Crozier came she had enjoyed existence as existence, wondering often why it was she wanted to spring up from the ground with the idea that she could fly, if she chose to try. Once when she was quite a little girl she had said to her mother, "I'm going to ile away," and her mother, puzzled, asked her what she meant. Her reply was, "It is in the hymn." Her mother persisted in asking what hymn, and was told with something like scorn that it was the hymn she herself had taught her only child—"I'll away, I'll away to the Promised Land."

She had thought that "I'll away" meant that there was some delicious motion which was to *ile,* and she had visions of something between floating and flying as being that blessed means of transportation.

As the years grew, she still wanted to "ile away" whenever the spirit of elation came upon her, and it had increased greatly since Shiel Crozier came. Out of her star as he was, she still felt near to him, and as though she understood him and he comprehended her. He had almost at once become to her an admired and splendid mystery which, however, at first she did not dare wish to solve. She had been content to be a kind of handmaiden to a generous and adored master. She knew that where he had been she could in one sense never go, and yet she wanted to be near him just the same. This was intensified after the Logan Trial and the shooting of the man who somehow seemed to have made her live in a new way.

As long ago as she could recall she had, in a crude, untutored way, been fond of the things that nature made beautiful; but now she seemed to see them in a new light; but not because any one had deliberately taught her. Indeed, it bored her almost to hear books read as Jesse Bulrush and Nurse Egan and the Young Doctor, and even her mother, read them to Crozier after his operation, to help him pass away the time. The only time she ever cared to listen—at school, though quick and clever, she had never cared for the printed page—was when, by chance, poetry or verses were read or recited. Then she would listen eagerly, not attracted by the words, but by the music of the lines, by the rhyme and rhythm, by the underlying feeling: and she got something out of it which had in one sense nothing to do with the verses themselves or with the conception of the poet.

Curiously enough, she most liked to hear Jesse Bulrush read, and he was the only man who read poems of his own initiative. He was a born sentimentalist, and this became by no means subtly apparent to Kitty during Crozier's illness. Whenever Nurse Egan was on duty Jesse contrived to be about, and to make himself useful and ornamental too; for he was a picturesque figure, with a taste for figured waistcoats and clean linen—he always washed his own white trousers and waistcoats, and he had a taste in ties which he made for himself out of silk bought by the yard. He was, in fact, a clean, wholesome man, with a flair for material things, as he had shown in the land proposal on which Shiel Crozier's fortunes hung, but with no gift for carrying them out, having neither constructive ability nor continuity of purpose. Yet he was an agreeable, humorous, sentimental soul, who at fifty years of age found himself "an old bach," as he called himself, in love at last with a middle-aged nurse with dark-brown hair and set figure, keen, intelligent eyes, and a most cheerful, orderly and soothing way with her.

Before Shiel Crozier was taken ill their romance began; but it grew in volume and intensity after the trial and the shooting, when they met by the bedside of the wounded man. Jesse had been away so much in different parts of the country before then that their individual merits never had had a real chance to make permanent impression. By accident, however, his business made it necessary for him to be much in Askatoon at the moment, and it was a propitious time for the activities of Cupid.

It had given Jesse Bulrush real satisfaction that Kitty Tynan listened to his reading of poetry — Longfellow, Byron, Tennyson, Whyte Melville, and Adam Lindsay Gordon chiefly — with such absorbed interest. His content was the greater because his lovely nurse—he did think she was lovely, as Rubens thought his painted ladies beautiful, though their cordial, ample, ostentatious proportions are not what Raphael regarded as the lines of the divine human figure — because his lovely nurse listened to his fat, happy voice rising and falling, swelling and receding on the waves of verse; though it meant nothing to her beyond the fact that his voice—very pleasant to hear—was having a good opportunity to show itself.

This was not apparent to her Bulrush, though Crozier and Kitty understood. Jesse only saw in the blue-garbed, clear-visaged woman a mistress of his heart, who had all the virtues and graces and who did not talk. That, to him, was the best thing of all. She was a superb listener, and he was a prodigious talker—could anything be more appropriate?

One day he went searching for Kitty at her favorite retreat, a little knoll behind and to the left of the house where a half-dozen trees made a pleasant resting-place of a fine lookout point. He found her in her usual place, with a look almost pensive on her face. He did not notice that, for he was visibly excited and elated.

"I want to read you something I've written," he said, and he drew from his pocket a paper.

"If it's another description of the timberland you've got for sale—please, not to me," she answered provokingly, for she guessed well what he held in his hand. She had seen him writing it. She had even seen some of the lines scrawled and rescrawled on bits of paper, showing careful if not swift and skilful manufacture. One of these crumpled-up bits of paper she had in her pocket now, having recovered it that she might tease him by quoting the lines at a provoking opportunity.

"It's not that. It's some verses I've written," he said with a wave of his hand.

"All your own?" she asked with an air of assumed innocent interest, and he did not see the frivolous gleam in her eyes, nor notice the touch of aloes on her tongue.

"Yes. Yes. I've always written verses more or less—I write a good many advertisements in verse," he added cheerfully. "They are very popular — not genius, quite, but there it is, the gift; and it has its uses in commerce as in affairs of the heart. But if you'd rather not, if it makes you tired—"

"Courage, soldier, bear your burden!" she said gaily. "Mount your horse and get galloping," she added motioning him to sit down.

A moment later he was pouring out his soul through a succulent and pleasing voice, from fat lips, flanked by a high-colored, healthy cheek like a russet apple:

"Like jewels of the sky they gleam,
  Your eyes of light, your eyes of fire;
In their dark depths behold the dream
  Of Life's glad hope and Love's desire.

"Above your quiet brow, endowed
  With Grecian charm to crown your grace,
Your hair in one soft Titian cloud
  Throws heavenly shadows on your face."

"Well, I've never had verses written to me before," Kitty remarked demurely when he had finished and sat looking at her questioningly. "But 'dark depths'—that isn't the right thing to say of my eyes! And Titian cloud of hair—is my hair Titian? I thought Titian hair was bronzy—tawny was what Mr. Burlingame called it when he was spouting,"—her upper lip curled in contempt.

"It isn't you, and you know it," he replied jerkily.

She bridled. "Do you mean to say that you come and read to me without a word of explanation, so that I shouldn't misunderstand, verses written for another? Do you mean to say that my eyes aren't eyes of light and eyes of fire, that I haven't got a Grecian brow? Do you mean to say those verses don't fit me—except for the Titian hair and heavenly shadows? And that I've got no right to think they're not meant for me? Is that so, that a man that's lived in my mother's house five years, eating at the same table with the family, and having his clothes mended free, with supper to suit him and no questions asked—is that so, that he takes up my time with poetry, four lines at a stretch, and a rhyme every other line, and then tells me it isn't for me!"

Her eyes flashed, her bosom palpitated, her hand made passionate little gestures, and she really seemed a little fury let loose. For a moment he was quite deceived by her acting; he did not see the lurking grin in the depths of her eyes.

Her voice shook with assumed passion. "Because I didn't show what I felt all these five years, and only forgot myself and exposed my real feelings when you read these verses to me, do you think any man that was a gentleman wouldn't in the circumstances say, 'These verses are for you, Kitty Tynan'? You betrayed me into showing you what I felt, and then you tell me your verses are for another girl!"

"Girl! Girl! Girl!" he burst out. "Nurse is thirty-seven—she told me so herself, and how could I tell that you—why, it's absurd! I've only thought of you always as a baby in long skirts—" she spasmodically drew her skirts down over her pretty, shapely ankles, while she kept her eyes covered with one hand—"and you've seen me makin' up to *her* ever since Crozier got the bullet. Ever since he was operated on, I've—"

"Yes, yes, that's right," she interrupted. "That's manly! Put the blame on him—him that couldn't help himself, struck by a horse-thief's bullet in the dark, him that's no more to blame for your carryings on while death was prowling about the door there—"

"Carryings on! Carryings on!" Jesse Bulrush was thoroughly deceived and thoroughly excited and indignant — the little devil to put him in a hole like this! "Carryings on! I've acted like a man all through — never anything else in your house, and it's a shame that I've got to listen to things that have never been said of me in all my life. My mother was a good, true woman, and she brought me up—"

"Oh, that's it, put it on your mother now, poor woman! who isn't here to stretch out her hand and stop you from playing a double game with two girls so placed they couldn't help themselves, just doing kind acts for a sick man." Suddenly she got to her feet. "I tell you, Jesse Bulrush, that you're a man—you're a man—"

SHE PUT BOTH HANDS ON HIS BIG, PANTING CHEST AND PUSHED HIM BACKWARD TOWARD THE HOUSE

But she could keep it up no longer. She burst out laughing, and the false tears of the actress she dashed from her eyes as she added: "That you're a man after my own heart! But you can't have it, even if you are after it, and you're welcome to the thirty-seven-year-old seraph in there!" She tossed a hand towards the house.

By this time he was on his feet, too, almost bursting. "Well, you wicked little rip—you darned little actress, you Ellen Terry at twenty-two, to think you could play it up like that! Why, never on the stage was there such—!"

"It's the poetry made me do it—it inspired me," she gurgled. "I felt—why, I felt here"—she pressed her hand to her heart—"all the pangs of unrequited love—oh, go away, go back to the house and read that to her! She's in the sitting-room, and my mother's away down-town. Now's your chance, Claude Melnotte!"

She put both hands on his big, panting chest and pushed him backward towards the house. "You're good enough for anybody, and if I wasn't so young and daren't leave mother till I get my wisdom-teeth cut, and till I'm thirty-seven—oh, oh, oh!" She laughed till the tears came into her eyes. "This is as good as—as a play."

"It's the best acted play I ever saw from 'Ten Nights in a Barroom' to 'Struck Oil,'" rejoined Jesse Bulrush with a face still half-ashamed yet beaming. "But, tell me, you heartless little woman, are the verses worth anything? Do you think she'll like them?"

Kitty grew suddenly serious, and a curious look he could not read deepened in her eyes. "Nurse'll like them—of course she will," she said gently. "She'll like them because they are you. Read them to her as you read them to me, and she'll only hear your voice, and she'll think them clever and you a wonderful man, even if you are fifty and weigh five hundred pounds. It doesn't matter to a woman what a man's saying or doing, or whether he's so much cleverer than she is, if she knows that under everything he's saying, 'I love you.' A man isn't that way, but a woman is. Now go." Again she pushed him with a small, brown hand.

"What a girl you are!" he said admiringly.

"Then be a father to me," she said teasingly.

"I can't marry both your mother—and *her*."

"P'r'aps you can't marry either," she replied sarcastically, "and I know that in any case you'll never be any relative of mine by marriage. Get going!" she said almost impatiently.

He turned to go, and she said after him, as he rolled away: "I'll let you hear some of my verses one day when you're older and can bear them and understand them."

"I'll bet they beat mine," he called back.

"You'll win your bet," she answered, and stood leaning against a tree with a look that required interpretation emerging and receding in her eyes. When he had disappeared, sitting down, she drew from her breast a slip of paper, unfolded it, and laid it on her knee. "It *is* better," she said. "It's not good poetry, of course, but it's truer and it's not done according to a pattern like his. Yes, it's real, real, real, and he'll never see it—never see it now, for I've fought it all out, and I've won."

Then she slowly read the verses aloud.

"Yes, I've won," she said with determination. So many of her sex have said things just as decisively, and while yet the exhilaration of their decision was inflaming them, have done what they said they would never, never, never do. Still there was a look in the fair face which meant a new force awakened in her character.

For a long time she sat brooding, forgetful of the present and of the little comedy of elderly lovers going on inside the house. She was thinking of the way conventions hold and bind us; of the lack of freedom in the lives of all, unless they live in wild places beyond the social pale. Within the past few weeks she had had visions of such a world beyond this active and ordered civilization, where the will and the conscience of a man or woman was the only law. She was not lawless in mind or spirit. She was only rebelling against a situation in which she was bound hand and foot, and could not follow her honest and exclusive desire, if she wished to do so.

Here was a man who was married, yet in a real sense he had no wife. Suppose that man cared for her, what a tragedy it would be for them to be kept apart! This man did not love her; and so there was no tragedy for both; yet all was not over yet—yes, all was "over and over and over," she said to herself as she sprang to her feet with a sharp exclamation of disgust—with herself.

Her mother was coming hurriedly towards her from the house. There was a quickness in her walk suggesting excitement, yet from the look in her face it was plain that the news she brought was not painful.

" He told me you were here, and—"

" Who told you I was here?"

" Mr. Bulrush—"

" So it's all settled!" she said with a little quirk of her shoulders.

" Yes, he's asked her, and they're going to be married. It's enough to make you die laughing to see the two middle-aged doves cooing in there."

" I thought perhaps it would be you. He said he would like to be a father to me."

" *That* would prevent me if nothing else would," answered the widow of Tyndall Tynan. " A stepfather to an unmarried girl—both eying each other for a chance to find fault—if you please, no thank you!"

" That means you won't get married till I'm out of the way?" asked Kitty with a look which was as much touched with myrrh as with mirth.

" It means I wouldn't get married till you are married, anyway," was the complacent answer.

" Is there any one special that—"

" Don't talk nonsense. Since your father died I've thought only of his child and mine, and I've not looked where I might. Instead, I've done my best to prove that two women could live and succeed without a man to earn for them; though of course without the pension it couldn't have been done in the style we've done it. We've got our place!"

There is a dignity attached to a pension which has an influence quite its own, and in the most primitive communities it has an aristocratic character which commands general respect. In Askatoon people gave Mrs. Tynan a better place socially because of her pension than they would have done if she had earned double the money which the pension brought her. " Everybody has called on us," she added with reflective pride.

" Principally since Mr. Crozier came," added Kitty. " It's funny, isn't it, how he made people respect him before they knew who he was?"

" He would make Satan stand up and take off his hat, if he paid Hades a visit," said Mrs. Tynan admiringly. " Anybody'd do anything for him."

Kitty eyed her mother closely. There was a strange, far-away, brooding look in Mrs. Tynan's eyes, and she seemed for a moment lost in thought.

" You're in love with him," said Kitty sharply.

" I was, in a way," answered her mother frankly. " I was, in a way—a kind of way, till I knew he was married. But it didn't mean anything. I never thought of it except as a thing that couldn't be."

" Why couldn't it be?" asked Kitty, smothering an agitation rising in her breast.

" Because I always knew he belonged to where we didn't, and because if he was going to be in love himself it would be with some girl like you. He's young enough for that, and it's natural he should get as his profit the years of youth that a young woman has yet to live."

" As though it was a choice between you and me, for instance!"

Mrs. Tynan started, but recovered herself. " Yes. If there had been any choosing, he'd not have hesitated a minute. He'd have taken you, of course. But he never gave either of us a thought that way."

" I though that till—till after he'd told us his story," replied Kitty boldly.

" What has happened since then?" asked her mother with sudden apprehension.

" Nothing has *happened* since. I don't understand it, but it's as though he'd been asleep for a long time and was awake again."

Mrs. Tynan gravely regarded her daughter, and a look of fear came into her face. " I knew you kept thinking of him always," she said; " but you had such sense, and he never showed any feeling for you—and young girls get over things. Besides, you always showed you knew he wasn't a possibility. But since he told us that day about his being married and all, has—has he been different towards you?"

" Not a thing, not a word," was the reply; " but—but there's a difference with him in a way. I feel it when I go in the room where he is."

"You've got to stop thinking of him," insisted the elder woman querulously. "You've got to stop it at once. It's no good. It's bad for you. You've too much sense to go on caring for a man that—"

"I'm going to get married," said Kitty firmly. "I've made up my mind. If you *have* to think about one person, you should stop thinking about another; anyhow, you've got to make yourself stop. So I'm going to marry—and stop."

"Who are you going to marry, Kitty? You don't mean to say it's John Sibley!"

"P'r'aps. He keeps coming."

"That gambling and racing fellow!"

"He owns a big farm, and it pays, and he has got an interest in a mine, and—"

"I tell you, you sha'n't," peevishly interjected Mrs. Tynan. "You sha'n't. He's vicious. He's vicious. He's — oh, you sha'n't! I'd rather—"

"You'd rather I threw myself away—on a married man?" asked Kitty covertly.

"My God—oh, Kitty!" said the other, breaking down. "You can't mean it—oh, you can't mean that you'd—"

"I've got to work out my case in my own way," broke in Kitty calmly. "I know how I've got to do it. I have to make my own medicine—and take it. You say John Sibley is vicious. He has only got one vice."

"YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THINKING OF HIM"

"Isn't it enough? Gambling—"

"That isn't a vice; it's a sport. It's the same as Mr. Crozier had. Mr. Crozier did it with horses only, the other does it with cards and horses. The only vice John Sibley's got is me."

"Is you?" asked her mother bewilderedly.

"Well, when you've got an idea you can't control and it makes you its slave, it's a vice. I'm John's vice, and I'm thinking of trying to cure him of it—and cure myself, too," Kitty added, folding and unfolding the paper in her hand.

"Here comes the Young Doctor," said

her mother, turning towards the house. " I think you don't mean to marry Sibley, but if you do, make him give up gambling."

" I don't know that I want him to give it up," answered Kitty musingly.

A moment later she was alone with the Young Doctor.

CHAPTER VIII

ALL ABOUT AN UNOPENED LETTER

" WHAT'S this you've been doing?" asked the Young Doctor, with a quizzical smile. " We never can tell where you'll break out."

" Kitty Tynan's measles!" she rejoined, swinging her hat by its ribbon. " Mine isn't a one-sided character, is it?"

" I know one of the sides quite well," returned the Young Doctor.

" Which, please, sir?"

The Young Doctor pretended to look wise. " The outside. I read it like a book. It fits the life in which it moves like the paper on the wall. But I'm not sure of the inside. In fact, I don't think I know that at all."

" So I couldn't call you in if my character was sick inside, could I?" she asked obliquely.

" I might have an operation and see what's wrong with it," he answered playfully.

Suddenly she shivered. " I've had enough of operations to last me a while," she rejoined. " I thought I could stand anything, but your operation on Mr. Crozier taught me a lesson. I'd never be a doctor's wife if I had to help him cut up human beings."

" I'll remember that," the Young Doctor replied mockingly.

" But if it would help put things on a right basis, I'd make a bargain that I wasn't to help do the carving," she rejoined wickedly. The Young Doctor always incited her to say daring things. They understood each other well. " So don't let that stand in the way," she added slyly.

" The man that gets you will be glad to get you without the anatomy," he returned gallantly.

" I wasn't talking of a man; I was talking of a doctor."

He threw up a hand and his eyebrows. " Isn't a doctor a man?"

" Those I've seen have been mostly fish."

" No feelings—eh?"

She looked him in the eyes and he felt a kind of shiver go through him. " Not enough to notice—I never observed you had any," she replied. " If I saw that you had I'd be so frightened I'd fly. I've seen pictures of an excited whale turning a boat full of men over. No, I couldn't bear to see you show any feeling."

The dark eyes of the Young Doctor suddenly took on a look which was a stranger to them. In his relations with women he was singularly impersonal, but he was a man, and he was young enough to feel the Adam stir in him. The hidden or controlled thing suddenly emerged. It was not the look which would be in his eyes if he were speaking to the woman he wanted to marry. Kitty saw it and she did not understand it, for she had at heart a feeling that she could go to him in any trouble of life and be sure of healing. To her he seemed wonderful, but she thought of him as she would have thought of her father, as a being of authority and knowledge—that operation showed him a great man, she thought, so skilful and precise and splendid; and the whole countryside had such confidence in him.

She regarded him as a being apart; but for a moment, an ominous moment, he was almost one with that race of men who feed in strange pastures. She only half saw the reddish glow which came swimming into his eyes, and she did not realize it, for she did not expect to find it there. For an instant, however, he saw with new eyes that primary eloquence of woman life, the unspent splendor of youth, the warm joy of the material being, the mystery of maidenhood in all its efflorescence. It was the emergence of his own youth again, as why should it not, since he had never married and had never dallied! But in a moment it was gone again—driven away.

" What a wicked little flirt you are!" he said, with a shake of the head. " You'll come to a bad end if you don't change your ways."

"Perform an operation, then, if you think you know what's the matter with me," she retorted.

"Sometimes in operating for one disease we come on another, and then there's a lot of thinking to be done," he suggested.

The look in her face was quizzical, yet there was a strange, elusive gravity in her eyes, an almost pathetic appealing. "If you were going to operate on me what would it be for?" she asked more flippantly than her face showed.

"Well, it's obscure, and the symptoms are not usual, but I should strike for the cancer love," he answered, with a direct look.

She flushed and changed on the instant. "Is love a cancer?" she asked. All at once she felt sure that he read her real story, and something very like anger quickened in her.

"Unrequited love is," he answered deliberately.

"How do you know it is unrequited?" she asked sharply.

"Well, I don't know it," he answered, dismayed by the look in her face. "But I certainly hope I'm right. I do, indeed."

"And if you were right what would you do—as a surgeon?" she questioned with an undertone of meaning.

"I would remove the cause of the disease."

She came close and looked him straight in the eyes. "You mean that *he* should go? You think that would cure the disease? Well, you are not going to interfere. You are not going to manœuvre anything to get him away—I know doctor's tricks. You'd say he must go away east or west to the sea for change of air to get well. That's nonsense, and it isn't necessary. You are absolutely wrong in your diagnosis—if that's what you call it! He is going to stay here. You aren't going to drive away one of our boarders and take the bread out of our mouths. Anyhow, you're wrong. You think because a girl worships a man's ability that she's in love with him. I adore your ability, but I'd as soon fall in love with a lobster—and be boiled with the lobster in a black pot. Such conceit men have!"

He was not convinced. He had a deep-seeing eye, and he saw that she was boldly trying to divert his belief or suspicion. He respected her for it. He might have said he loved her for it with a kind of love which can be spoken of without blushing or giving cause to blush, or reason for jealousy, anger or apprehension.

He smiled down into her gold-brown eyes and he thought what a real woman she was. He felt, too, that she would tell him something that would give him further light if he spoke wisely now.

"I'd like to see some proof that you are right, if I am wrong," he answered cautiously.

"Well, I'm going to be married," she said with an air of finality.

He waved a hand deprecatingly. "Impossible—there's no man worth it. Who is the undeserving wretch?"

"I'll tell you to-morrow," she replied. "He doesn't know yet how happy he's going to be. What did you come here for? Why did you want to see me?" she added. "You had something you were going to tell me. Hadn't you?"

"That's quite right," he replied. "It's about Crozier. This is my last visit to him professionally. He can go on now without my care—yours will be sufficient for him. It has been all along the very best care he could have had. It did more for him than all the rest, it—"

"You don't mean that," she interrupted, with a flush and a bosom that leaped under her pretty gown. "You don't mean that I was of more use than the nurse—than the future Mrs. Jesse Bulrush?"

"I mean just that," he answered. "Nearly every sick person, every sick man, I should say, has his mascot, his ministering angel, as it were. It's a kind of obsession, and it often means life or death, whether the mascot can stand the strain of the situation. I know an old man—down by Dingley's Flat it was, and he wanted a boy—his grand-nephew—beside him always. He was getting well, but the boy took sick and the old man died the next day. The boy had been his medicine. Sometimes it's a particular nurse that does the trick; but whoever it is, it's a great vital fact. Well, that's the part you played to Mr. Shiel Crozier of Lammis and Castlegarry aforetime. He owes you much, a very great deal."

" I am glad of that," she said softly, her eyes on the distance.

" She is in love with him in spite of what she says," remarked the Young Doctor to himself. " Well," he continued aloud, " the fact is, Crozier's almost well in a way, but his mind is in a state, and he is not going to get wholly right as things are. Since things came out in court, since he told us his whole story, he has been different. It's as though—"

She interrupted him hastily and with suppressed emotion. " Yes, yes, do you think I've not noticed that? He's been asleep in a way for five years, and now he's awake again. He is not James Gathorne Kerry now; he is James Shiel Gathorne Crozier, and — oh, you understand, he's back again where he was before—before he left *her!* "

The Young Doctor nodded approvingly. " What a little brazen wonder you are! I declare you see more than—"

" Yet you won't have me?" she asked mockingly.

" You're too clever for me," he rejoined with spirit. " I'm too conceited. I must marry a girl that'd kneel to me and think me as wise as Socrates. But he's back again, as you say, and, in my view his wife ought to be back again also."

" She ought to be *here,*" was Kitty's swift reply, " though I think mighty little of her — mighty little, I can tell you. Stuck-up, great tall stork of a woman, that lords it over a man as though she was a goddess. Wears diamonds in the middle of the day, I suppose, and cold-blooded as —as a fish."

" She ought to have married me, according to your opinion of me. You said I was a fish," remarked the Young Doctor, with a laugh.

" The whale and the catfish!"

" Heavens, what spite!" he rejoined. " Catfish—what do you know about her? You may be brutally unjust — waspishly unjust, I should say."

" Do I look like a wasp?" she asked half tearfully.

She was in a strange mood.

" You look like a golden busy bee," he answered. " But tell me, how did you come to know enough about her to call her a cat?"

" Because, as you say, I was a busy golden bee," she retorted.

" That information doesn't get me much further," he answered.

" I opened that letter," she replied.

" ' That letter '—you mean you opened the letter he showed us which he had left sealed as it came to him five years ago?" The Young Doctor's face wore a look of trouble and dismay.

" I steamed the envelope open—how else could I have done it! I steamed it open, saw what I wanted, and closed it up again."

The Young Doctor's face was pale now. This was a terrible revelation. He had a man's view of such conduct. He almost shrank from her, though she stood there as inviting and pretty and innocent a specimen of girlhood as the eye could wish to see. She did not look dishonorable.

" Do you realize what that means?" he asked in a cold, hard tone.

" Oh, come, don't put on that look and don't talk like John the Evangelist," she retorted. " I did it, not out of curiosity, and not to do any one harm, but to do her good—his wife."

" It was dishonorable—wicked and dishonorable."

" If you talk like that, Mr. Piety, I'm off," she rejoined, and she started away.

" Wait—wait," he said, laying firm fingers on her arm. " Of course you did it for a good purpose. I know. You cared enough for him for that."

He had said the right thing, and she halted and faced him. " I cared enough to do a good deal more than that if necessary. He has been like a second father to me, and—"

Suddenly a light of humor shot into the eyes of both. Shiel Crozier as a " father " to her was too gayly artificial not to provoke their natural sense of the grotesque.

" I wanted to find out his wife's address to write to her and tell her to come quick," she explained. " It was when he was at the worst. And then, too, I wanted to know the kind of woman she was before I wrote to her. So—"

" You mean to say you read that letter through that he had kept unopened and unread for five long years?" The Young Doctor was certainly shocked and disturbed again.

"I OPENED THAT LETTER," SHE REPLIED

"Every word of it," Kitty answered shamelessly, "and I'm not sorry. It was in a good cause. If he had said 'Courage, soldier,' and opened it five years ago, it would have been good for him. Better to get things like that over."

"It was *that* kind of a letter, was it—a catfish letter?"

Kitty laughed a little scornfully. "Yes, just like that, Mr. Easily Shocked. Great, showy, purse-proud creature!"

"And you wrote to her?"

"Yes, a letter that would make her come if anything would. Talk of tact, I was as smooth as a billiard-ball. But she hasn't come."

"The day after the operation I cabled to her," said the Young Doctor.

"Then you steamed the letter open and read it, too?" asked Kitty sarcastically.

"Certainly not. Ladies first—and last," was the equally sarcastic answer. "I cabled to Castlegarry, his father's place, also to Lammis that he mentioned when he told us his story—Crozier of Lammis, he was."

"Well, I wrote to the London address in the letter," added Kitty. "I don't think she'll come. I asked her to cable me, and she hasn't. I wrote such a nice letter, too. I did it for his sake."

The Young Doctor laid his hands on both her shoulders. "Kitty Tynan, the man who gets you will get what he doesn't deserve," he remarked.

"That might mean anything," she answered.

"It means that he owes you more than he can guess."

Her eyes shone with a strange, soft glow. "In spite of opening the letter?"

The Young Doctor nodded, then added humorously: "That letter you wrote her—I'm not sure that my cable wouldn't have far more effect than your letter."

"Certainly not. You tried to frighten her, but I tried to coax her—to make her feel ashamed. I wrote as though I was fifty."

The Young Doctor regarded her quizzically and even dubiously. "What was the sort of thing you said to her?"

"For one thing, I said that he had every comfort and attention two loving women

"SHE'S COMING; HIS WIFE'S COMING—SHE'S IN QUEBEC NOW"

and one fond nurse could give him; but that, of course, his legitimate wife would naturally be glad to be beside him when he passed away, and that if she made haste she might be here in time."

The Young Doctor leaned against a tree shaking with laughter.

"What are you smiling at?" Kitty asked ironically.

"Oh, she'll be sure to come — nothing will keep her away after being coaxed like that!" he said when he could get his breath again.

"Laughing at me as though I was a clown in a circus!" she exclaimed. "Laughing when, as you say yourself, the man that she—the cat—wrote that fiendish letter to is in trouble."

"It was a fiendish letter, was it?" he asked, suddenly sobered again. "No, no, don't tell me," he added with a protesting gesture. "I don't want to hear. I don't want to know. I oughtn't to know. Besides, if she comes, I don't want to be prejudiced against her. He is troubled, poor fellow."

"Of course he is. There's the big land deal—his syndicate. He's got a chance of making a fortune, and he can't do it because—but Jesse Bulrush told me in confidence, so I can't explain."

"I have an idea, a pretty good idea—Askatoon is small."

"And mean sometimes."

"Tell me what you know. Perhaps I can help him," urged the Young Doctor. "I have helped more than one good man turn a sharp corner here."

She caught his arm.

"You are as good as gold," she said.

"You are—impossible," he replied.

They talked of Crozier's land deal and syndicate as they walked slowly toward the house. Mrs. Tynan met them at the door, a look of excitement in her face.

"A telegram for you, Kitty," she announced.

"For me!" exclaimed Kitty eagerly. "It's a year since I had one."

She tore open the yellow envelope. A light shot up in her face as she read the message.

She thrust the telegram into the Young Doctor's hands.

"She's coming; his wife's coming—she's in Quebec now. It was my letter—my letter, not your cable, that brought her," Kitty added triumphantly.

CHAPTER IX

NIGHT SHADE AND MORNING GLORY

It was as though Crozier had been told of the coming of his wife, for when night came, on the day Kitty had received her telegram, he could not sleep. He was the sport of a consuming restlessness. His brain would not be still. He could not discharge from it the thoughts of the day and make it vacuous. It would not relax. It seized with intentness on each thing in turn which was part of his life at the moment and gave it an abnormal significance. In vain he tried to shake himself free of the successive obsessions which stormed down the path of the night, dragging him after them, a slave lashed to the wheels of a chariot of flame.

Now it was the great land deal and syndicate on which his future depended, and the savage fate which seemed about to snatch his fortune away as it had done so often before; as it had done on the day when Flamingo went down near the post at the Derby with a madwoman dragging at the bridle. He had had a sure thing then, and it was whisked away just when it would have enabled him to pass the crisis of his life. Wife, home, the old fascinating, crowded life—they had all vanished because of that vile trick of destiny; and ever since then he had been wandering in the wilderness through years that brought no fruit of his labors. Yet here was his chance, his great chance to get back what he had and was in the old misspent days, with new purposes in life to follow and serve; and it was all in danger, cruel danger, of being swept away when it was almost within his grasp.

If he could but achieve the big deal he could return to wife and home, he could be master in his own house, not a dependent on his wife's bounty. That very evening Jesse Bulrush, elated by his own good fortune in capturing Cupid, had told him as sadly as was possible, while his own fortunes were as he thought soaring, that every avenue of credit seemed closed, that neither bank nor money-lender, trust or loan company, would let him have the ten thousand dollars necessary for him to hold his place in the syndicate; while each of the other members of the clique had flatly and cheerfully refused, saying they had all they could carry as it was. Crozier had commanded Jesse not to approach them, but the fat sentimentalist had an idea that his tongue had a gift of wheedling, and he believed that he could make them "shell out," as he put it. He had failed, and he was obliged to say so, when Crozier, suspecting, brought him to book.

"They mean to crowd you out—that's their game," Bulrush had said. "They've closed up all the ways to cash or credit. They mean to do you out of your share. Unless you put up the cash within the four days left they'll put it through without you. They told me to tell you that."

And Crozier had not even cursed them. He said to Jesse Bulrush that it was an old game to get hold of a patent that made a fortune for a song while the patentee died in the poorhouse. Yet that four days was time enough for a live man to do a "flurry of work," and he was fit enough to walk up their backs yet with hobnailed boots, as they said in Kerry when a man was out for war.

Over and over again this hovering tragedy drove sleep from his eyes; and in the spaces between there were a hundred fleeting visions of little and big things to torture him — remembrances of incidents when debts and disasters dogged his footsteps, and behind them all, floating among the elves and gnomes of ill-luck and disappointment, was a woman's face. It was not his wife's face, not a face that belonged to the old life, but one which had been part of his daily existence for four years. It was the first face he saw when he came back from unconsciousness after the operation which saved his life — the face of Kitty Tynan.

And ever since the day when he had told the story of his life this face had kept passing before his eyes with a disturbing persistence. Kitty had said to her mother and to the Young Doctor that he had seemed like one who had awakened after he had told his story, and in a sense it was startlingly true. It was as though, while he was living under an assumed name, the real James Shiel Gathorne Crozier did not exist, or was in the far background of the doings and sayings of J. G. Kerry. His wife and the past had been shadowy in a way, had been as part of a life lived out, which would return in some distant day, but was not vital to the present. Much as he had loved his wife, the violent wrench away from her had seemed almost as complete as death itself; but the resumption of his own name and the telling of his story had produced a complete psychological change in him mentally and bodily. The impersonal feeling which had marked his relations with the two women of this household, and with all women, was suddenly gone. He longed for the arms of a woman round his neck—it was five years since any woman's arms had been there, since he had kissed any woman's lips. Now in the hour when his fortunes were again in the fatal balance, when he would be started again for a fair race with the wife from whom he had been so long parted, another face came between.

All at once the question Burlingame asked him as to whether his wife was living came to him. He had never for an instant thought of her as dead, but now a sharp and terrifying anxiety came to him. If his wife was living! *Living?* Her death had never been even a remote possibility to his mind, though the parting had had the decisiveness of death. Beneath all his shrewdness and ability he was at heart a dreamer, a romancist to whom life was an adventure in a half-real world.

It was impossible to sleep. He tossed from side to side. Once he got up in the dark and drank great draughts of water; once again as he thought of Mona, his wife, as she was in the first days of their married life, a sudden impulse seized him. He sprang from his bed, lit a candle, went to the desk where his unopened letter lay, and took it out. With the feeling that he must destroy this record, this unread but, as he knew, ugly record of their differences, and so clear her memory of any cruelty, of any act of anger, he was about to hold it to the flame of the candle when he thought he heard a sound behind him as of the door of his room gently closing. Laying the letter down, he went to the door and opened it. There was no one stirring. Yet he had a feeling as though some one was there in the darkness. His lips framed the words, "Who is it? Is any one there?" but he did not utter them.

A kind of awe possessed him. He was Celtic; he had been fed on the supernatural when he was a child; he had had strange, indefinable experiences of hallucinations in the days when he lived at Castlegarry, and all his life he had been a friend of the mystical. It is hard to tell what he thought as he stood there and peered into the darkness of the other room—the living-room of the house. He was in a state of trance, almost—the victim of the night. But as he closed the door softly the words of the song that Kitty Tynan had sung to him the day when he found her brushing his coat came to him and flooded his brain. The last two verses of the song kept drowning his sense of the actual, and he was swayed by the superstition of bygone ancestors:

"Whereaway goes my lad—tell me, has he gone alone?
  Never harsh word did I speak, never hurt I gave;
Strong he was and beautiful; like a heron he has flown—
  Hereaway, hereaway will I make my grave.

"When once more the lad I loved hereaway, hereaway
  Comes to lay his hand in mine, kiss me on the brow,
I will whisper down the wind, he will weep to hear me say—
  'Whereaway, whereaway goes my lover now!'"

He went to bed again, but sleep would not come. The verses of the lament kept singing in his brain. He tossed from side to side, he sought to control himself, but it was of no avail. Suddenly he remembered the bed of boughs he had made for himself at the place where Kitty had had her meeting with the Young Doctor the day before. Before he was shot he used to sleep in the open in the summer time. If he could get to sleep anywhere it would be there.

Hastily dressing himself in flannel shirt and trousers, and dragging a blanket from the bed, he found his way to the bedroom door, went into the other room, and felt his way to the front door which would open into the night. All at once he was conscious of another presence in the room, but the folk-song was still beating in his brain, and he reproved himself for succumbing to fantasy. Finding the front door in the dark, he opened it and stepped outside. There was no moon, but there were millions of stars in the blue vault above, and there was enough light for him to make his way to the place where he had slept " hereaway and oft."

He knew that the bed of boughs would be dry, but the night would be his, and the good, cool ground and the soughing of the pines and the sweet infinitesimal and innumerable sounds of the breathing earth, itself asleep. He found the place and threw himself down. Why, here were green boughs under him, not the dried remains of what he had placed there. Kitty—it was Kitty, dear, gay, joyous, kind Kitty, who had done this thing, thinking that he might want to sleep in the open again after his illness. Kitty — it was Kitty who had so thoughtfully served him; Kitty, with the instinct of true, unselfish womanhood, with the gift of the outdoor life, with the unpurchasable gift of friendship. What a girl she was! How rich she could make the life of a man!

" Hereaway my heart was soft; when he kissed my happy eyes,
Held my hand, and laid his cheek warm against my brow,
Home I saw upon the earth, heaven stood there in the skies—
Whereaway, whereaway goes my lover now? "

How different she was, this child of the West, of nature, from the woman he had left behind in England—the sophisticated, well-appointed, well-controlled girl — ah, too well-controlled even in the first days of married life—too well-controlled for him who had the rushing impulses of a Celtic warrior of olden days. Delicate, refined, perfectly poised, and Kitty to her like a sunflower to a sprig of heliotrope. Mona —Kitty, the two names, the two who, so far, had touched his life, each in her own way as none others had done, they floated before his eyes till sight and feeling grew dim. With a last effort he strove to eject Kitty from his thoughts, for there was the wife he had won in the race of life, and he must stand by her, play the game, ride honestly, even in exile from her, run straight, even with that unopened, bitter, upbraiding letter in the—

He fell asleep, and soon and slowly and ever so dimly the opal light of the prairie dawn came stealing over the landscape. With it came stealing the figure of a girl towards the group of trees where lay the man of Lammis on the bed of green boughs which she had renewed for him. She had followed him from the dark room where she had waited near him through the night —near him, to be near him for the last time; alone with him and the kind, holy night before the morrow came which belonged to the other woman, who had written to him as she never could have written to any man in whose arms she ever had lain. And the pity and the tragedy of it was that he loved his wife—the catfish wife. The sharp, pitiless instinct of love told her that the stirring in his veins which had come of late to him, which beat higher, even poignantly, when she was near him now, was only the reflection of what he felt for his wife. She knew the unmerciful truth, but it only deepened what she felt for him, yet what she must put away from herself after to-morrow. Those verses she wrote—they were to show that she had conquered herself! Yet, but a few hours after, here she was kneeling outside his door at night, here she was pursuing him to the place where he slept. The coming of the other woman—she knew well that she was *something* to this man of men—had aroused in her all she had felt, had terribly intensified it.

She trembled, but she drew near, accompanied by the heavenly odors of the freshened herbs and foliage and the cool tenderness of the river close by. In her white dress and loosened hair she was like some spirit of a new-born world finding her way to the place she must call home. It was all so dim, so like clouded silver, the trees and the grass and the bushes and the night. Noiselessly she stole over the grass and into the shadows of the trees where he lay. Again and again she paused. What would she do if he was awake and saw her? She did not know. The moment must take care of itself. She longed to find him sleeping.

It was so. The hazy light showed his face upward to the skies, his breast rising and falling in a heavy, luxurious sleep.

She drew nearer and nearer till she was kneeling beside him. His face was warm with color even in the night air—warmer than she had ever seen it. One hand lay across his chest and one was thrown back over his head with the abandon of perfect rest. All the anxiety and restlessness which had tortured him had fled, and his manhood showed bold and serene in the lightening dusk.

A sob almost broke from her as she gazed her fill, then slowly she leaned over and softly pressed her lips to his—the first time that ever in love they had been given to any man. She had the impulse to throw her arms round him, but she mastered herself. He stirred, but he did not wake. His lips moved as she withdrew hers.

"My darling," he said in the quick, broken way of the dreamer.

She rose swiftly and fled away among the trees toward the house.

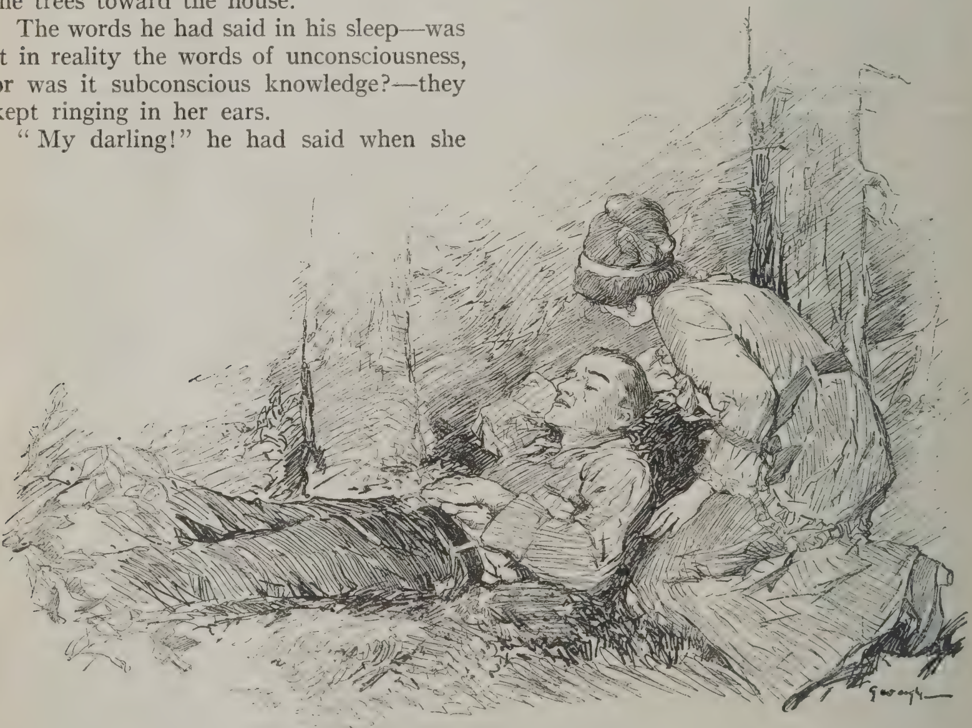
The words he had said in his sleep—was it in reality the words of unconsciousness, or was it subconscious knowledge?—they kept ringing in her ears.

"My darling!" he had said when she kissed him. There was a light of joy in her eyes now, though she felt that the words were meant for another. Yet it was her kiss, her own kiss which had made him say it. If—but with happy eyes she stole to her room.

CHAPTER X

"S. O. S."

At breakfast next morning Kitty did not appear. Had it been possible she would have fled into the far prairie and set up a lonely tabernacle there; for with the day came a reaction from the courage possessing her the night before, and in the opal wakening of the dawn. When broad daylight came she felt as though her bones were water and her body a wisp of straw. She could not bear to meet Shiel Crozier's eyes, and thus it was she had an early breakfast on the plea that she had ironing to do. She was not, however, prepared to see Jesse Bulrush drive up with a buggy



SHE DREW NEARER AND NEARER TILL SHE WAS KNEELING BESIDE HIM after breakfast and take Crozier away. When she did see them at the gate the impulse came to cry out to Crozier—what to say she did not know, but still to cry out. The cry on her lips was that which she had seen in the newspaper the day before, the cry of the shipwrecked seafarers, the signal of the wireless telegraphy, " S. O. S."—the piteous call, " Save Our Souls!" It sprang to her lips, but it got no further save in an unconscious whisper. On the instant she felt so weak and shaken and lonely that she wanted to lean upon some one stronger than herself, as she used to lean against her father while he sat with one arm round her studying his railway problems. She had been self-sufficient enough all her life,—" an independent little bird of freedom," as Crozier had called her—but she was like a boat tossed on mountainous waves now.

" S. O. S.!—Save our souls!"

As though she really had made this poignant call Crozier turned round in the buggy where he sat with Jesse Bulrush, pale but erect; and, as though by instinct, he looked straight to where she was. When he saw her his face flushed, he could not have told why. Was it that there had passed to him in his sleep the subconscious knowledge of the kiss which Kitty had given him; and, after all, had he said " My darling " to her and not to the wife far away across the seas, as he thought? A strange feeling, as of secret intimacy, never felt before where Kitty was concerned, passed through him now, and he was suddenly conscious that things were not as they had ever been, that the old impersonal comradeship had vanished. It disturbed, it almost shocked him. Whereupon he made a valiant effort to recover the old ground, to get out of the new atmosphere into the old, cheering air.

" Come and say good-by, won't you?" he called to her.

" S. O. S.—S. O. S.—S. O. S.!" was the cry in her heart, but she called back to him from her lips, " I can't. I'm too busy. Come back soon, soldier!"

With a wave of the hand he was gone. " Not a care in the world she has," Crozier said to Jesse Bulrush. " She's the sunniest creature Heaven ever made."

" Too skittish for me," responded the other with a sidelong look, for he had caught a note in Crozier's voice which gave him a sudden suspicion.

" You want the kind you can drive with an oat-straw and a chirp—eh, my friend?"

" Well, I've got what I want," was the reply. " Neither of us 'll kick over the traces."

" You are a lucky man," replied Crozier. " You've got a remarkably big prize in the lottery. She is a fine woman, is Nurse Egan, and I owe her a great deal. I only hope things turn out so well that I can give her a good, fat wedding-present. But I sha'n't be able to do anything that's close to my heart if I can't get the cash for my share in the syndicate."

" Courage, soldier, as Kitty Tynan says," responded Jesse Bulrush cheerily. " You never know your luck. The cash is waiting for you somewhere, and it'll turn up, be sure of that."

" I'm not sure of that. I can see as plain as your nose how Bradley and his clique have blocked me everywhere from getting credit, and I'd give five years of my life to beat them in their dirty game. If I fail to get it at Aspen Vale I'm done. But I'll have a try—a good, big try. How far exactly is it? I've never gone by this trail."

Bulrush shook his head reprovingly. " It's too long a journey for you to take after your knock-out. You're not fit to travel yet. I don't like it a bit. Lydia said this morning it was a crime against yourself, going off like this, and—"

" *Lydia?* — oh, yes, *pardonnez moi, m'sieu'!* I did not know her name was Lydia."

" I didn't either till after we were engaged."

Crozier stared in blank astonishment. " You didn't know her name till after you were engaged? What did you call her before that or then?"

" Why, I called her Nurse," answered the fat lover. " We all called her that, and it sounded comfortable and homelike and good for every day. It sounded as though you had confidence and your life was in her hands—a first-class you-and-me kind of feeling."

" Why don't you stick to it, then?"

" She doesn't want it. She says it sounds so old, and that I'd be calling her 'mother' next."

"And won't you?" asked Crozier slyly.

"Everything in season," beamed Jesse, and he shone, and was at once happy and composed.

Crozier relapsed into silence, for he was thinking that the lost years had been barren of children. He turned back to the home they had left. It was some distance away now, but he could see Kitty still at the corner of the house with a small harvest of laundered linen in her hand.

"She made that fresh bed of boughs for me—ah, but I had a good sleep last night!" he added aloud. "I feel fit for the fight before me." He drew himself up and began to nod here and there to people who greeted him.

In the house behind them at the moment Kitty was saying to her mother, "Where is he going, mother?"

"To Aspen Vale," was the reply. "If you'd been at breakfast you'd have heard. He'll be gone two days, perhaps three."

Three days! She regretted now that she had not said to herself, "Courage, soldier," and gone to say good-by to him when he called to her. Perhaps she would not see him again till after the other woman—till after the wife — came. Then — then the house would be empty; then the house would be so still. And then John Sibley would come and—

CHAPTER XI

IN THE CAMP OF THE DESERTER

Three days passed, but before they ended there came another telegram from Mrs. Crozier stating the time of her expected arrival at Askatoon. It was addressed to Kitty, and Kitty almost savagely tore it up into little pieces and scattered it to the winds. She did not even wait to show it to the Young Doctor; but he had a subtle instinct as to why she did not; and he was rather more puzzled than usual at what was passing before his eyes. In any case, the coming of the wife must alter all the relations existing in the household of the widow Tynan. The old, unrestrained, careless friendship could not continue. The newcomer would import an element of caste and class which would freeze mother and daughter to the bones. Crozier was the essence of democracy, which in its purest form is akin to the most aristocratic element and is easily affiliated with it. He had no fear of Crozier. Crozier would remain exactly the same; but would not Crozier be whisked away out of Askatoon to a new fate, reconciled to being a receiver of his wife's bounty?

"If his wife gets her arms round his neck, and if she wants to get them there, she will; and once there he'll go with her—like a gentleman," said the Young Doctor sarcastically. Admiring Crozier as he did, he also had underneath all his knowledge of life a wholesome fear—or an unreasonable apprehension of man's weakness where a woman was concerned. The man who would face a cannon's mouth would falter before the face of a woman whom he could crumple with one hand.

The wife arrived before Crozier returned, and he and Kitty met the train. The local telegraphist had not divulged to any one the contents of the telegram to Kitty, and there were no staring spectators on the platform. As the great express stole in almost noiselessly, like a tired serpent, Kitty watched its approach with outward cheerfulness. She had braced herself to this moment till she looked the most buoyant, joyous thing in the world. It had not come easily. With desperation she had fought a fight during these three lonely days till at last she had conquered, sleeping each night on Crozier's bed of boughs under the stars, and coming in with the opal light of dawn. Now she leaned forward with heart beating fast, but with smiling face and with eyes so bright that she deceived the Young Doctor.

There was no sign of inward emotion, of hidden troubles, as she leaned forward to see the great lady step from the train—great in every sense was this lady in her mind; imposing in stature, a Juno, a tragedy queen, a Zenobia, a daughter of the gods who would not stoop to conquer. She looked in vain, however, for the Mrs. Crozier she had imagined made no appearance from the train. She hastened down the platform still with keen eyes scanning the passengers who were mostly alighting to stretch their legs and get a breath of air.

"She's not here," she said at last darkly to the Young Doctor who had followed her.

Then suddenly she saw emerge from a little group at the steps of a car a child in a long dress—so it seemed to her, the being was so small and delicate—and come forward, having hastily said good-by to her fellow-passengers. As the Young Doctor said afterward, "She wasn't bigger than a fly," and she certainly was as graceful and pretty and piquante as a child-woman could be.

Now, with her pretty, alert, rather assertive blue eyes she saw Kitty, and came forward. "Miss Tynan?" she asked with a smile and an encompassing look.

Now Kitty was idiomatic in her speech at times, and she occasionally used slang of the best brand, but she avoided those colloquialisms which were merely part of the vocabulary of the uneducated. Indeed, she had had no inclination to use them, for her father had set her a good example, and she liked to hear good English spoken. That was why Crozier's talk had been like music to her; and she had been keen to distinguish between the studied rhetorical method of Augustus Burlingame, who modeled himself on the orators of all the continents, and was what might be called a synthetic elocutionist. Kitty herself was as simple and natural as a girl could be, and as a rule had herself in perfect command; but she was so stunned by the sight of this *petite* person before her that in reply to Mrs. Crozier's question she only said abruptly—

"The same!"

Then she came to herself and could have bitten her tongue out for that plunge into the vernacular of the West; and forthwith a great prejudice was set up in her mind against Mona Crozier, in whose eyes she caught a look of quizzical criticism or, as she thought, contemptuous comment. That for one instant she had been caught unawares and so had put herself at a disadvantage angered her; but she had been embarrassed and confounded by this miniature Juno, and her reply was a vague echo of talk she heard around her every day, purely mechanical and involuntary. Also she could have choked the Young Doctor, whom she caught looking at her with wondering humor, as though he was trying to see "what her game was"—as he said to her afterwards.

It was all due to the fact that from the day of the Logan Trial, and particularly from the day when Shiel Crozier had told his life-story, she had always imagined his wife as a stately Amazonian being with the bust of a Juno and the carriage of a Boadicea. She had looked for an empress in splendid garments, and—and here was a humming-bird of a woman, scarcely bigger than a child, with the buzzing energy of a bee, but with a queer sort of manfulness, too; with a square, slightly projecting chin, as Kitty came to notice afterwards; together with some small lines about the mouth and at the eyes which were indicative of trouble endured and suffering undergone. Kitty did not notice that, but the Young Doctor took it in with his embracing glance as the wife encompassed Kitty with her inward comment, which was—

"So this is the chit who wrote to me like a mother!"

But Mona Crozier did not underestimate Kitty for all that, and she wondered why it was that Kitty had written as she did. One thing was quite clear: Kitty had had good intentions, else why have written at all?

All these thoughts had passed through the mind of each with a good many others while they were shaking hands, and the Young Doctor summoned his man to carry her hand luggage to the extra buggy he had brought to the station. One of the many other thoughts that were passing through three active minds was Kitty's inward comment:

"Just think; this is the woman that he talked of as if she was a sort of moving mountain that would fall on you and crush you, if you didn't look out!"

No doubt Crozier would have repudiated this description of his conversation, but the fact was he had unconsciously talked of Mona with a sort of hush in his voice, as expressing his own awe; for a woman to him was always something outside his real understanding. He had a romantic medieval view, which translated weakness and beauty into a miracle, and what psychologists call "an inspired control."

"She's no bigger than—than a wasp," said Kitty to herself, after the Young Doctor had assured Mrs. Crozier that her husband was quite well again; that he had recovered more quickly than was expected, and had gained strength wonderfully after the crisis was passed.

"An elephant can crush you, but a wasp can sting you," was Kitty's further comment, "and that's why he was always nervous when he spoke of her." Then, as the Young Doctor had already done, she noticed the tiny lines about the tiny mouth, and the fine-spun webs about the bird-bright eyes.

The Young Doctor attributed these lines mostly to anxiety and inward suffering, but Kitty set them down as the outward signs of an inward fretfulness and quarrelsomeness, which was rendered all the more offensive in her eyes by the fact that Mona Crozier was the most spotless thing she had ever seen, at the end of a journey—and this, a journey across a continent. Orderliness and prim exactness, taste and fastidiousness, tireless tidiness were seen in every turn, in every fold of her dress, in the way everything she wore had been put on, in the decision of every step and gesture.

Kitty noticed all this, and she said to herself, "Wound up like a watch, cut like a cameo," and she instinctively felt the little dainty cameo brooch at her own throat, the only jewelry she ever wore, or had ever worn.

"Sensible of her not to bring a maid," commented the Young Doctor inwardly. "That would have thrown Kitty into a fit. But how she manages to look like this after six thousand miles of sea and land going is beyond me—and Crozier so rather careless in his ways! Not what you would call two notes in the same key—she and Crozier," he added as he told her she need not trouble about her luggage, and took charge of the checks for it.

"My husband was not well enough to come to the train?" Mrs. Crozier asked, as the two-seated "rig" started away with the ladies in the back seat.

"Certainly, if he had known of your coming," was Kitty's reply.

"You have not told him I was coming?"

"Wasn't it better to have a talk with you first?" asked Kitty meaningly.

Mrs. Crozier almost nervously twitched the little jet bag she carried, then she looked Kitty in the eyes.

"You will, of course, have reason for thinking so, if you say it," was her enigmatical reply. "And of course you will tell me. You did not say to him that you had written to me, or that the doctor had cabled me?"

"Oh, you got his cable?" questioned Kitty with a little ring of triumph in her voice, meant to reach the ears of the Young Doctor. It did reach him, and he replied to the question.

"We thought it better not, chiefly because he had for so many years held no communication with you, and had lived—well, you may say he had lived a life that did not, unfortunately, take you into account." The little lady blushed, or flushed.

"May I ask how you know this to be so—if it is so," she asked, and there was the sharpness of the wasp in her tone as it seemed to Kitty.

"The Logan Trial—I mentioned it in my letter to you," interposed Kitty. "He was shot for the evidence he gave at the trial. Well, at the trial a great many questions were asked by a lawyer who wanted to hurt him, and he answered them."

"Why did the lawyer want to hurt him?" Mona Crozier asked quickly.

"Just mean-hearted envy and spite and deviltry," was Kitty's answer. "They were both handsome men, and perhaps that was it."

"I never thought my husband handsome, though he was always distinguished looking," was the quiet reply.

"Ah, but you haven't seen him or heard from him for so long!" remarked Kitty a little spitefully.

"How do you know that?" Mrs. Crozier was nettled, though she did not show it; but Kitty felt it was so, and was glad.

"He said so at the Logan Trial."

"Was that the kind of question asked at the trial?" the wife quickly interjected.

"Yes, lots of that kind," returned Kitty.

"What was the object?"

"To make him look not so distinguished—to look like nothing. If a man wasn't handsome, but only distinguished"—Kitty's mood was dangerous—"and you make him look cheap, that's one advantage, and—"

Here the Young Doctor, having observed the rising tide of antagonism in the tone of the voices behind him, gently interposed, and made it clear that the purpose was to throw a shadow on the past of her husband in order to discredit his evidence; to which Mrs. Crozier nodded her understanding.

She liked the Young Doctor, as who did not who came in contact with him, except those who had fear of him, and who had an idea that he could read their minds as he read their bodies. And even this girl at her side—Mona Crozier realized that the part she had played was evidently an unselfish one, though she felt with strange accuracy and piercing intuition that whatever her husband thought of the girl, the girl thought too much of her husband. Somehow, all in a moment, it made her sorry for the girl's sake. The girl had meant well by her husband in sending for his wife—that was certain; and she did not look bad. She was too neat, too sedately and reservedly dressed, in spite of her auriferous face and head and her burnished tone, to be bad—too fearless in eye, too concentrated to be the rover in fields where she had no tenure or right.

She turned and looked Kitty squarely in the eyes, and a new, softer look came into her own, subduing what to Kitty was the challenging alertness and selfish inquisitiveness and superficiality.

"You have been very good to Shiel—you two kind people," she said in a different tone, and there came a sudden faint mist to her eyes.

That was her lucky moment, and she spoke as she did just in time, for Kitty was beginning to resent her deeply; to dislike her for more than was reasonable and certainly without any justice.

Kitty spoke up quickly. "Well, you see, he was always kind and good to other people, and that was why—"

"But that Mr. Burlingame did not like him?" The wife had a strange intuition regarding Mr. Burlingame. She was sure that there was a woman in the case—the girl beside her?

"That was because Mr. Burlingame was not kind or good to other people," was Kitty's sedate response.

There was an undertone of reflection in the voice which did not escape Mrs. Crozier's senses, and it also caught the ear of the Young Doctor, to whom there came a sudden revelation of the reason why Augustus Burlingame had left Mrs. Tynan's house.

"Oh—!" exclaimed Mrs. Crozier enigmatically. Presently with a quick impulse of suppressed excitement as she saw the Young Doctor reining in the horses slowly, she added: "My husband—when have you arranged that I should see him?"

"When he gets back—home," Kitty replied with an accent on the last word.

Mrs. Crozier started visibly.

"When he gets back home — back from where—he is not here?" she asked with a look of anxiety and in a tone of chagrin.

She had come a long way, and had pictured this meeting at the end of the journey with a hundred variations, but never with this one—that she should not see him at once when the journey was over. Was it hurt pride or disappointed love which spoke in her face, in her words? After all, it was bad enough that her private life and affairs should be dragged out in a court of law; that these two kind strangers whom she had never seen till a few minutes ago, should be in the inner circle of knowledge of the life of her husband and herself, without her self-esteem being hurt like this. She was a very woman, and the look of the thing was not nice to her eyes, while it must belittle her in theirs. Had this girl done it on purpose? Yet why should she—she who had so appealed to her to come to him, have sought to humiliate her?

Kitty was not quite sure what she ought to say. "You see, we expected him back before this. He is very exact in all his—"

"Very *exact?*" asked Mrs. Crozier in astonishment.

This was a new phase of Shiel Crozier's

character. He must, indeed, have changed since he had caused her so much anxiety in days gone by.

"Usen't he to be so?" asked Kitty a little viciously. "He is so very exact," she added. "He expected to be back home before this"—how she loved to use that word *home*—"and so we thought he would be here when you arrived. But he has been detained at Aspen Vale. He had a big business deal on—"

"*A big business deal?* Is he—is he in a large way of business?" Mona asked almost incredulously and breathlessly. Shiel Crozier in a large way of business, in "a big business deal"—it did not seem possible. His had ever been the game of chance. Business—business?

"He doesn't talk himself, of course; that wouldn't be like him"—Kitty had joy in giving this wife the character of her husband—"but they say that if he succeeds in what he's trying to do now he will make a great deal of money."

"Then he has not made it yet?" asked Mrs. Crozier.

"He has always been able to pay his board regularly, with enough left for a pew in church," answered Kitty with dry malice; for she mistook the light in the other's eyes, and thought it was avarice; and the love of money had no place in Kitty's make-up. She herself would never have been influenced by money where a man was concerned.

"Here's the house," she quickly added; "our home—where Mr. Crozier lives. He has the best room, so yours won't be quite so good. It's mother's—she's giving it up to you. I suppose with your trunks and things you'll want a room to yourself," added Kitty, not at all unconscious that she was putting a phase of the problem of Crozier and his wife in a very commonplace way; but she did not look into Mrs. Crozier's face as she said it.

Mrs. Crozier, however, was fully conscious of the poignancy of the remark, and once again her face flushed slightly though she retained outward composure.

"Mother, mother, are you there?" Kitty called as she escorted the wife up the garden walk.

An instant later Mrs. Tynan cheerfully welcomed the disturber of the peace of the home where Shiel Crozier had been the central figure for so long.

CHAPTER XII

AT THE RECEIPT OF CUSTOMS

"What are you laughing at, Kitty? You cackle like a young hen with her first egg." So spoke Mrs. Tynan to her daughter, who alternately swung backward and forward in a big rocking-chair, silently gazing into the distant sky, or sat still and "cackled" as her mother had remarked.

A person of real observation and astuteness, however, would have noticed that Kitty's laughter told a story which was not joy and gladness—neither good humor nor the abandonment of a luxurious nature. It was reflectively scornful, it was tinged with bitterness and had the smart of the nettle.

Her mother's question only made her laugh the more, and at last Mrs. Tynan stooped over her and said, "I could shake you, Kitty. You'd make a snail fidget, and I've got enough to do to keep my senses steady with all house work—and now her in there!" She tossed a hand behind her fretfully.

Quick with love for her mother as she always was, Kitty caught the other's trembling hand. "You've always had too much to do, mother—always been slaving for others. You've never had time to think whether you're happy or not, or whether you've got a problem—that's what people call things, when they've got so much time on their hands that they make a play of their inside feelings and work it up till it sets them crazy."

Mrs. Tynan's mouth tightened and her brow clouded. "I've had my problems too, but I always made quick work of them. They never had a chance to overlay me like a mother overlays her baby and kills it."

"Not '*like* a mother overlays,' but '*as* a mother overlays,'" returned Kitty with a queer note to her voice. "That's what they taught me at school. The teacher was always picking us up on that kind of thing. I said a thing worse than that when Mrs. Crozier"—her fingers motioned towards another room—" came to-day. I don't know what possessed me. I was off my trolley, I suppose, as John Sibley puts it. Well, when Mrs. James Shiel Gathorne Crozier said—oh, so sweetly and kindly—'You are Miss Tynan?' what do you think I replied? I said to her, 'The same'!"

Rather an acidly satisfied smile came to Mrs. Tynan's lips. "That was like the Slatterly girls," she replied. "Your father would have said it was the vernacular of the rail-head. He was a great man for odd words, but he knew always just what he wanted to say and he said it out. You've got his gift. You always say the right thing, and I don't know why you made that break with her—of all people."

A meditative look came into Kitty's eyes. "Mr. Crozier says every one has an imp that loves to tease us, and trip us up, and make us appear ridiculous before those we don't want to have any advantage over us."

"*I* don't want Mrs. Crozier to have any advantage over you and me, I can tell you that. Things'll never be the same here again, Kitty dear, and we've all got on so well—with him so considerate of every one, and a good friend always, and just one of us! and his sickness making him seem like our own, and—"

"Oh, hush — will you hush, mother!" interposed Kitty sharply. "He's going away with her back to the old country, and we might just as well think about getting other boarders, for I suppose Mr. Bulrush and his bonny bride will set up a little bulrush tabernacle on the banks of the Nile"—she nodded in the direction of the river outside—" and they'll find a little Moses and will treat it as their very own."

"Kitty, how can you?"

Kitty shrugged a shoulder. "It would be ridiculous for that pair to have one of their own. It's only the *young* mother with a new baby that looks natural to me."

"Don't talk that way, Kitty," rejoined her mother sharply. "You aren't fit to judge of such things."

"I will be before long," retorted her daughter. "Anyway, Mrs. Crozier isn't any better able to talk than I am," she added irrelevantly. "She never was a mother."

"Don't blame her," said Mrs. Tynan severely. "That's God's business. I'd be sorry for her, so far as that was concerned if I were you. It's not her fault."

"It's an easy way of accounting for good undone," returned Kitty. "P'r'aps it was God's fault, and p'r'aps if she had loved him more—"

Mrs. Tynan's face flushed with sudden irritation and that fretful look came to her eyes which accompanies a lack of comprehension. "Upon my word, well, upon my word, of all the vixens that ever lived, and you looking like a yellow pansy and too sweet for daily use! Such thoughts in your head—who'd have believed that you—!"

Kitty made a mocking face at her mother. "I'm more than a girl, I'm a woman, mother, who sees life all around me from the insect to the mountain, and I know things without being told. And I always did. Just life and living tell me things, and maybe, too, the Irish in me that father was."

"It's so odd. You're such a mixture of fun and fancy—at least you always have been; but there's something new in you these days. Kitty, you make me afraid—yes, you make your mother afraid. After what you said the other day about Mr. Crozier I've had bad nights, and I get nervous thinking."

Kitty suddenly got up, put her arm round her mother and kissed her. "You needn't be afraid of me, mother. If there'd been any danger, any real danger, I wouldn't have told you. Mr. Crozier's away, and when he comes back he'll find his wife here, and there's the end of anything or any thinking. If there'd been danger, it would have been settled the night before he went away. I kissed him that night as he was sleeping out there under the trees."

Mrs. Tynan sat down weakly and fanned herself with her apron. "Oh, oh, oh, dear Lord!" she said.

"I'm not afraid to tell you anything I ever did, mother," declared Kitty firmly; "though I'm not prepared to tell you everything I've felt. I kissed him as he slept. He didn't wake, he just lay there sleeping—sleeping." A strange distant dreaming look came into her eyes. She smiled like one who saw a happy vision, and an eerie expression stole into her face. "I didn't want him to wake," she continued. "I asked God not to let him wake. If he'd waked—oh, I'd have been ashamed enough till the day I died in one way! Still he'd have understood, and he'd have thought no harm. But it wouldn't have been fair to him—and there's his wife in there," she added, breaking off into a different tone. "They're a long way above us—up among the peaks, and we're at the foot of the foothills, mother; but he never made us feel that, did he? The difference between him and most of the men I've ever seen! The difference!"

"There's the Young Doctor," said her mother reproachfully.

"He—him! He's by himself, with something of every sort in him from the top to the bottom. There's been a ditcher in his family, and there may have been a duke. But Shiel Crozier—Shiel"—she flushed as she said the name like that, but a little touch of defiance came into her face, too—"he is all of one kind. He's not a blend. And he's married to her in there!"

"You needn't speak in that tone about her. She's as fine as can be."

"She's as fine as a bee!" retorted Kitty. Again she laughed that mocking, almost mirthless laugh for which her mother had called her to account a little while before. "You asked me a while ago what I was laughing at, mother," she continued. "Why, can't you guess? Mr. Crozier talked of her always as though she was—oh, like the pictures you've seen of Britannia, all swelling and spreading, with her hand on a shield and her face saying, 'Look at me and be good,' and her eyes saying, 'Son of man, get upon thy knees!' Why, I expected—we all expected to see—a sort of great-goodness-gracious goddess, that kept him frightened to death of her. Bless you, he never opened her letter, he was so afraid of her; and he used to breathe once or twice hard—like that, when he mentioned her"—she breathed with such mock awe that her mother laughed with a little touch of kindly malice, too.

"Even her letter," Kitty continued remorselessly; "it was as though she—that little sprite—wrote it with a rod of chastisement, as the Bible says. It—"

"What do you know of the inside of that letter?" asked her mother staring.

"What the steam of the tea-kettle could let me see," responded Kitty defiantly; and then, to her shocked and astonished mother, she told what she had done, and what the nature of the letter was.

"I wanted to help him if I could, and I think I'll be able to do it—I've thought it all out," Kitty added eagerly with a glint of steel in the gold of her eyes and a strange fantastic kind of wisdom in her look.

"Kitty," said her mother severely and anxiously, "it's madness interfering with other people's affairs—of that kind. It never was any use."

"This will be the exception to the rule," returned Kitty. "There she is"—again she flicked a hand towards the other room—"after they've been parted five years. Well, she came after she read my letter to her, and after I'd read that unopened letter to him, which made me know how to put it all to her. I've got intuition—that's Celtic and mad," she added with her chin thrusting out at her mother, to whom the Irish that her husband had been, which was so deep in her daughter, was ever a mystery to her, and of which she was more or less afraid.

"I've got a plan, and I believe—I know—it will work," Kitty continued. "I've been thinking and thinking, and if there's trouble between them; if he says he isn't going on with her till he's made his fortune; if he throws that unopened letter in her face, I'll bring in my invention to deal with the problem, and then you'll see! But all this fuss for a little tiny button of a thing like that in there—pshaw! Mr. Crozier 's worth a real queen with the beauty of one of the Rhine maidens—how he used to tell that story of the Rhinegold—do you remember? Wasn't it grand? Well, I am glad now that he's going—yes, whatever trouble there may be, still he is going. I feel it in my heart."

She paused and her eyes took on a sombre tone. Presently with a slight husky pain in her voice, like the faint echo of a wail, she went on: "Now that he's going

I'm glad we've had the things he gave us, things that can't be taken away from us. What you have enjoyed is yours forever and ever. It's memory, and for one moment or for one day or one year of those things you loved, there's fifty years, perhaps, for memory. Don't you remember the verses I cut out of the newspaper:

'Time, the ruthless idol-breaker,
Smileless, cold iconoclast,
Though he rob us of our altars,
Cannot rob us of the past.'"

"That's the way your father used to talk," replied her mother rather helplessly. "There's a lot of poetry in you, Kitty."

"More than there is in her?" asked Kitty, again indicating the region where Mrs. Crozier was.

"There's as much poetry in her as there is in—in me. But she can do things—that little bit of a baby-woman can do things, Kitty. I know women, and I tell you that if that woman hadn't a penny she'd set to and earn it; and if her husband hadn't a penny, she'd make his home comfortable just the same somehow, for she's as capable as capable can be. She had her things unpacked, her room in order herself—she didn't want your help or mine—and herself with a fresh dress on before you could turn round."

"I'M NOT AFRAID TO TELL YOU ANYTHING I EVER DID, MOTHER"

Kitty's eyes softened still more. "Well, if she'd been poor he would never have left her, and then they wouldn't have lost five years,—think of it, five years of life with the man you love lost to you!—and there wouldn't be this tough old knot to untie now."

"She has suffered, that little sparrow has suffered, I tell you, Kitty. She has a grip on herself like—like—"

"Like Mr. Crozier with a bronco under his hand," interjected Kitty. "She's too neat for me—too eternally spick and span for me, mother. It's as though the Being that made her said, 'Now I'll try and see if I can produce a model of a grown-up, full-sized piece of my work.' Mrs. Crozier is an exhibition model, and Shiel Crozier's over six feet three, and loose and free, and like a wapiti in his gait. If he was a wapiti he'd carry the finest pair of antlers ever was."

"Kitty, you make me laugh," responded the puzzled woman. "You're the most whimsical creature, I declare, and—"

At that moment there came a small tapping at the door behind them, and a small silvery voice said, "May I come in?" as the door opened and Mrs. Crozier, very neatly and precisely yet prettily dressed, entered.

"Please make yourself at home—no need to rap," answered Mrs. Tynan. "Out in the West here we live in the open like. There's no room closed to you, if you can put up with what there is, though it's not what you're used to."

"For five months in the year during the past five years I've lived in a house about half as large as this," was Mrs. Crozier's reply. "With my husband away there wasn't the need of much room."

"Well, he only has one room here," responded Mrs. Tynan. "He never seemed too crowded in it."

"Where is it? Might I see it?" the small, dark-eyed, dark-haired wife, with the little touch of nectarine bloom and a little powder also, asked; and though she spoke in a matter-of-fact tone there was a look of wistfulness in her eyes, a gleam of which Kitty caught ere it passed.

"You've been separated, Mrs. Crozier," answered the elder woman, "and I've no right to let you into his room without his consent. You've had no correspondence for five years—isn't that so?"

"Did he tell you that?" the regal little lady asked composedly, but with an underglow of anger in her eyes.

"He told the court that at the Logan Trial," was the reply.

"At the murder trial—he told that?" Mrs. Crozier asked almost mechanically, her face gone pale and a little haggard.

"He was obliged to answer when that wolf Gus Burlingame was after him," interposed Kitty with kindness in her tone, for, suddenly, she saw through the outer walls of the little wife's being into the inner courts. She saw that Mrs. Crozier loved her husband now, whatever she had done in the past. The sight of love does not beget compassion in a loveless heart, but there was love in Kitty's heart; and it was even greater than she would have wished any human being to see; and by it she saw with radium clearness behind the veil of the other woman's being.

"Surely he could have avoided answering that," urged Mona Crozier bitterly.

"Only by telling a lie," Kitty quickly answered, "and I don't believe he ever told a lie in his life. Come," she added, "I will show you his room. My mother needn't do it, and so she won't be responsible. You have your rights as a wife until they're denied you. You mustn't come, mother," she said to Mrs. Tynan, and she put a tender, golden hand on her arm. "This way," she added to the little person in the pale blue, which suited well her very dark hair, blue eyes, and rose-touched cheeks.

CHAPTER XIII

KITTY SPEAKS HER MIND AGAIN

A MOMENT later they stood inside Shiel Crozier's room. The first glance his wife gave encompassed the walls, the table, the bureau, and the desk which contained her own unopened letter. She was looking for a photograph of herself.

There was none in the room, and a parched and arid look came into her face. The glance and its sequel did not escape Kitty's notice. She knew well—as who would not — what Mona Crozier was hoping to see, and she was human enough to feel a kind of satisfaction in the wife's evident chagrin and disappointment; for the unopened letter in the baize-covered desk which she had read was sufficient warrant for a punishment and penalty due the little lady, and not the less because it was so long delayed—had not Shiel Crozier had his bitter herbs to drink over the past five years!

Moreover Kitty was sure beyond any doubt at all that Shiel Crozier's wife, when she wrote the letter, did not love her husband, or at least did not love him in the right or true way. She loved him only so far as her then selfish nature permitted her to do; only in so far as the pride of money which she had, and her husband had not, allowed her to do; only in so far as the nature of a tyrant could love (though the tyranny was pink and white and sweetly perfumed and had the lure of youth). In her primitive way Kitty had intuitively apprehended the main truth, and that was sufficient to justify her in contributing to Mona Crozier's punishment.

And Kitty's perceptions were true. At the start Mona was in nature proportionate to her size; and when she married she had not loved Crozier as he had loved her. Maybe that was why—though he may not have admitted it to himself—he could not bear to be beholden to her when his ruin came. Love makes all things possible, and there is no humiliation in taking from one who loves and is loved—that uncapitalized and communal partnership which is not of the earth earthy. Perhaps that was why, though Shiel loved her, he had had a bitterness which galled his soul, why he had a determination to win sufficient wealth to make himself independent of her. Down at the bottom of his chivalrous Irish heart he had learned the truth, that to be dependent on her would beget in her contempt for him, and he would be only her paid paramour and not her husband in the true sense. Quixotic he had been, but under his quixotism there was at least the shadow of a great tragical fact, and it had made him a matrimonial deserter. Whether tragedy or comedy would emerge was all on the knees of the gods.

"It's a nice room, isn't it?" asked Kitty when there had passed from Mona Crozier's eyes the glaze or mist—not of tears, but stupefaction—which had followed her inspection of the walls, the bureau, the table, and the desk.

"Most comfortable, and so very clean—quite spotless," the wife answered admiringly, and yet a little drearily. It made her feel humiliated that her man could live this narrow life of one room without despair, with sufficient resistance to the lure of her hundred and fifty thousand pounds and her own delicate and charming person. Here, it would seem, he was content. One easy chair made out of a barrel, a couch, a bed—a very narrow bed, like a soldier's, a bed for himself alone—a small table, a shelf on the wall with a dozen books, a little table, a bureau, and an old-fashioned, sloping-topped, shallow desk covered with green baize, on high legs, so that he could stand as he wrote (Crozier had made that high stand for the desk himself) like a soldier, too. That was what the room conveyed to her—the spirit of the soldier, bare, clean, strong, sparse, a workshop and a chamber of sleep in one, like the tent of an officer on the march. After the feeling had come to her, to heighten the sensation, she espied a little card hung under the small mirror on the wall. There was writing on it, and going nearer she saw in red pencil the words, "Courage, soldier!"

These were the words which Kitty was so fond of using, and Kitty had a thrill of triumph now as she saw the woman whom Crozier had fled from looking at the card. She herself had come and looked at it many times since Crozier went away, for he had only put it there just before he left on this last expedition to Aspen Vale to carry through his deal. It had brought a great joy to Kitty's heart. It had made her feel that she had some share in his life; that, in a way, she had helped him on the march, the vivandière who carried the water-bottle which would give him drink when parched, battle-worn, or wounded.

Mona Crozier turned away from the card, sadly reflecting that nothing in the room recalled herself; that she was not here in the very core of his life in even the smallest way. Yet this girl, this sunny creature with the call of youth and passion in her eyes, this Ruth of the wheat-fields, came and went from this room as though she was a part of it. She did this and that for him, and no doubt was on such terms of intimacy with him that they were part of each other's life in a scheme of domesticity which was unlike any boarding-house scheme or organization she had ever known. Here in everything there was the air and the decorum and the unartificial comfort of home. Visions of apartments and lodgings and boarding-houses in the old land rose up before her, and the contrast was immeasurable.

This was why he could live without his wedded wife and her gold and her brocade, and the silk and the Persian rugs, and the grand piano and the carriages and the high silk hat from Piccadilly. Her husband had had the luxuries of wealth, and here he was living like a Spartan on his hill—and alone; though he had a wife that men had besieged both before and after marriage. A feeling of impotent indignation and anger suddenly took possession of her. Here he was with two women, unattached, —one interesting and good and agreeable and good looking, and the other almost a beauty—who were part of the whole rustic scheme in which he lived. They made him comfortable, they did the hundred things that a valet or a fond wife would do; they no doubt hung on every word he uttered—and he could be interesting beyond most men. She had realized terribly how interesting he was after he had fled; when men came about her and talked to her in many ways, with many variations, but always with the one tune behind all they said; always making for the one goal, no matter the point from which they started or how circuitous their route.

As time went on she had hungrily longed to see her husband, and other men had no power to interest her; but still she had not sought to find him. At first it had been offended pride, injured self-esteem, in which the value of her own desirable self and of her very desirable gold, was not lost; then it became the pride of a wife in whom the spirit of the eternal woman was working, and she would have died rather than have sought to find him. Five years—and not a word from him.

Five years and not a letter from him! Her eyes involuntarily fell on the high desk with the green baize top. Of all the letters he had written at that desk not one had been addressed to her. Slowly, and with an unintentional solemnity, she went up to it and laid a hand upon it. Her chin only cleared the edge of it—he was a tall man, her husband.

"This is the place of secrets, I suppose," she said with a bright smile and an attempt at gaiety to Kitty, who had watched her with burning eyes; for she had felt the thrill of the moment. She was as sensitive to atmosphere of this sad play of life as nearly and as vitally as the deserted wife.

"I shouldn't think it a place of secrets," Kitty answered after a moment. "He seldom locks it, and when he does I know where the key is."

"Indeed?" Mona Crozier stiffened. A look of reproach and reprobation came into her eyes. It was as though she was looking down from a great height upon a poor creature who did not know the first rudiments of personal honor, the fine elemental customs of life.

Kitty saw and understood, but she did not hasten to reply, or to set things right. She met the lofty look unflinchingly, and she had pride and some little malice too—it would do Mrs. Crozier good, she thought—in saying, as she looked down on the humming-bird trying to be an eagle:

"I've had to get things for him—papers and so on, and send them on when he was away, and even when he was at *home* I've had to act for him; and so even when it was locked I had to know where the key was. He asked me to help him that way."

Mona noted the stress laid upon the word "home," and for the first time she had a suspicion that this girl knew more than even the Logan Trial had disclosed, and that she was being satirical and suggestive.

"Oh, of course," she returned cheerfully in response to Kitty—"you acted as a kind of clerk for him."

There was a note in her voice which she might better not have used. If she but knew it, she needed this girl's friendship very badly; and she might have remembered that she would not have been here in her husband's room had it not been for the letter Kitty had written—a letter which had made her heart beat so hard when she received it, that she had sunk helpless to the floor on one of those soft rugs, representing the soft comfort which money can bring.

The reply was like a slap in the face.

"I acted for him in any way at all that he wished me to," Kitty answered with quiet boldness and shining face.

Mona's hand fell away from the green baize desk, and her eyes again lost their sight for a moment. Kitty was not savage by nature. She had been goaded as much by the thought of the letter Crozier's wife had written to him in the hour of his ruin as by the presence of the woman in this house, where things would never be as they had been before. She had struck hard, and now she was immediately sorry for it: for this woman was here in response to her own appeal; and, after all, she might well be jealous of the fact that Crozier had had close to him for so long and in such conditions a girl like herself, younger than his own wife—and prettier—yes, certainly prettier, she admitted to herself.

"He is that kind of a man. What he asked for, any good woman could do and not be sorry," Kitty added presently when the knife had gone deep enough.

"Yes, he was that kind of a man," responded the other gently now, and with a great sigh of relief. Suddenly she came nearer and touched Kitty's arm. "And thank you for saying so," she added. "He and I have been so long parted, and you have seen so much more of him than I have of late years! You know him better—as he is. If I said something sharp just now, please forgive me. I am—oh, indeed, I am grateful to you and your mother!"

She paused. It was hard for her to say what she felt she must say, for she did not know how her husband would receive her—he had done without her for so long; and she might need this girl and her mother sorely. The girl was a friend in the best sense, or she would not have sent for her. She must remind herself of this continually lest she should take wrong views.

Kitty nodded, but for a moment she did not reply. Her hand was on the baize-covered desk. All at once, with determination in her eyes, she said: "You didn't use him right or you'd not have been parted for five years. You were rich and he was poor,—he is poor now, though he may be rich any day—and he wouldn't stay with you because he wouldn't take your money to live on. If you had been a real wife to him he wouldn't have seen that he'd be using your money; he'd have taken it as though it was his own, out of the purse which was always open and belonged to both, just as if you were partners. You must feel—"

"Hush, for pity's sake, hush!" interrupted the other.

"You are going to see him again," Kitty persisted. "Now, don't you think it just as well to know what the real truth is?"

"How do you know what is the truth?" asked the trembling little stranger with a last attempt to hold her position, to conceal from herself the actual facts.

"The Young Doctor and my mother and I were with him all the time he was ill after he was shot, and the trial had only told half the truth. He wanted us, his best friends here, to know the whole truth, so he told us that he left you because he couldn't bear to live on your money. It was you made him feel that, though he didn't say so. All the time he told his story he spoke of you as though you were some goddess, some great queen—"

A look of hope, of wonder, of relief came into the tiny creature's eyes. "He spoke like that of me; he said—?"

"He said what no one else would have said, probably; but that's the way with people in love—they see what no one else sees, they think what no one else thinks. He talked with a sort of hush in his voice about you till we thought you must be some stately, tall, splendid Helen of Troy kind of person with a soul like an ocean, instead of "—she was going to say something that would have seemed unkind, and she stopped herself in time—"instead of a sort of fairy, one of the little folk that never grow up; the same as my father used to tell me about."

"You think very badly of me, then?" returned the other with a sigh. Her courage, her pride, her attempt to control the situation had vanished suddenly, and she became for the moment almost the child she looked.

"We've only just begun. We're all his friends here, and we'll judge you and think of you according to what happens between you and him. *You wrote him that letter!*"

She suddenly placed her hand on the desk as the inspiration came to her to have this matter of the letter out now, and to have Mrs. Crozier know exactly what the position was, no matter what might be thought of herself. She was only thinking of Shiel Crozier and his future now.

"What letter did I write?" There was real surprise and wonder in her tone.

"That last letter you wrote to him—the letter in which you—in which you gave him fits for breaking his promise, and talked like a proud, angry angel from the top of the stairs!"

"How do you know of that letter? He, my husband, told you what was in that letter; he showed it to you?" The voice was indignant, low, and almost rough with anger.

"Yes, your husband showed me the letter—unopened."

"Unopened—I do not understand." Mona steadied herself against the foot of the bed and looked in a helpless way at Kitty. Her composure was gone, though she was very quiet, and she had that look of a vital absorption which possesses human beings in crises of their lives.

Suddenly Kitty took from behind a book on a shelf a key, opened the desk, and took out the letter which Crozier had kept sealed and unopened all the years; which he had never read.

"Do you know that?" Kitty said, and held it out for Mrs. Crozier to see.

Two dark-blue eyes stared confusedly at the letter—at her own handwriting. Kitty turned it over. "You see it is sealed as it was when you sent it to him. He has never opened it. He does not know what is in it."

"He has—kept it—five years—unopened," Mona said in broken phrases scarce above a whisper.

"He has never opened it, as you see."

"Give—give it to me," the wife said, stepping forward to stay Kitty's hand as she opened the lid of the desk to replace the letter.

"It's not your letter—no, you shall not," said Kitty firmly as she jerked aside the hand laid upon her wrist, and threw one arm on the lid, holding it down as Mrs. Crozier tried to keep it open. Then with a swift action of the other hand she locked the desk and put the key in her pocket.

"If you destroyed this letter he would never believe but that it was worse than it is; and it is a bad enough letter, Heaven knows, for any woman to have written to her husband—or to any one else's husband! You thought you were the centre of the world when you wrote that letter. Without a penny, he would be a great man, with a great future, but you are only a pretty little woman with a fortune, who has thought a great lot of herself, and far too much of herself only, when she wrote that letter."

"How do you know what is in that letter?" There was agony and challenge at once in the other's voice.

"Because I read it—oh, don't look so shocked! I'd do it again. I knew just how to act when I'd read it. I steamed it open and closed it up again. Then I wrote to you. I'm not sorry I did it. My motive was a good one. I wanted to help him. I wanted to understand everything, so that I'd know best what to do. Though he's so far above us in birth and position, he seemed in one way like our own. That's the way it is in new countries like this. We don't think of lots of things that you finer people in the old countries do, and we don't think evil till it trips us up. In a new country all are strangers among the pioneers, and they have to come together. This town is only twelve years old, and scarcely anybody knew each other at the start. We had to take each other on trust, and we think the best as long as we can. Mr. Crozier came to live with us, and soon he was just part of our life—not a boarder, not some one staying the night who paid you what he owed you in the morning. He was a friend you could say your prayers with, or eat your meals with, or ride a hundred miles with, and just take it as a matter of course; for he was part of what you were part of, all this out here—don't you understand?"

"I am trying hard to do so," was the reply in a hushed voice. Here was a world, here were people of whom Mona Crozier had never dreamed. They were so much of an antique time—far behind the time that her old land represented; not a new world, but the oldest world of all. She began to understand the girl also, and her face took on an understanding look, as with eyes like bronze suns Kitty continued:

"So, though it was wrong—wicked—in one way, I read the letter, as a mother would read a letter written to her child, to do the child some good by it, if it could be done. If I hadn't read that letter you wouldn't be here. Was it worth while my doing it?"

At that moment there was a knock at the outer door of the other room, or, rather, on the lintel of it. Mona started. Suppose it was her husband—that was her thought.

Kitty read the look. "No, it isn't Mr. Crozier. It's the Young Doctor. I know his knock. Will you come and see him?"

The wife was trembling, she was very pale, her eyes were rather staring, but she fought to control herself. It was evident that Kitty expected her to do so. It was also quite certain that Kitty meant to settle things now, in so far as it could be done and in so far as the wife was concerned.

"He knows as much as you do?" asked Mrs. Crozier.

"He has not read the letter and I haven't told him what's in it; but he knows that I read it, and what he doesn't know he guesses. He is Mr. Crozier's honest, clever friend. I've got an idea—an invention to put this thing right. It's a good one. You'll see. But I want the Young Doctor to know about it. He never has to think twice. He knows what to do the very first time."

A moment later they were in the other room, with the Young Doctor smiling down at "the little spot of a woman," as he called Crozier's wife.

CHAPTER XIV

AWAITING THE VERDICT

"You look quite settled and at home," the Young Doctor remarked, as he offered Mrs. Crozier a chair.

She took it, for never in her life had she felt so small physically since coming to the great, new land. The islands where she was born were in themselves so miniature that the minds of their people, however small, were not made to feel insignificant. But her mind, which was, after all, vastly larger in proportion than the body enshrining it, felt suddenly that both were lost in a universe. Her impulse was to let go and sink into the helplessness of tears, to be overwhelmed by an unconquerable loneliness; but the Celtic courage in her, added to that ancient native pride which prevents one woman from giving way before another woman towards whom she bears jealousy or a desire to dominate, prevented her from showing the weakness she felt. Instead, it roused her vanity and made her choose to sit down, so disguising perceptibly the disparity of height which certainly gave Kitty an advantage over her and made the Young Doctor like some menacing Polynesian god.

Both these people had an influence and authority in Mona Crozier's life which was infinitely greater than her fortune. Her fortune had not kept her husband beside her when her delicate and perfumed tyranny began to flutter its banners of control over him. Her fortune had driven Shiel Crozier forth when her beauty and her love ought to have kept him close to her, no matter what fate brought to their door, or what his misfortune or the catastrophe falling on him. It was all deeply humiliating, and the inward dejection made her now feel that her body was the last effort of a failing creative power. So she sat down instead of standing up in a vain effort at retrieval.

The Young Doctor sat down also, but Kitty did not, and she seemed Amazonian to Mona's eyes. It must be said for Kitty that she remained standing only because she felt she could not stay fixed to one spot. A restlessness seized her which did not exist when she was in Crozier's room with Mona. It was now as though something was going to happen which she must face standing; as though something was coming out of the unknown and forbidding future and was making itself felt before its time. Her eyes were almost painfully bright as she moved about the room doing little things. Presently she began to lay a cloth and place dishes silently on the table—long before the proper time, as her mother, with a chiding look, reminded her when she entered for a moment and then quickly passed on into the kitchen, at a warning glance from Kitty that the Young Doctor and Mona were not to be disturbed.

"Well, Askatoon is a place where one feels at home quickly," added the Young Doctor, as Mona did not at once respond to his first remark. "Every one who comes here always feels as if he—or she—owns the place. It's the way the place is made. The trouble with most of us is that we want to put the feeling into practise and take possession of 'all and sundry.' Isn't that true, Miss Tynan?"

"As true as most things you say," retorted Kitty, as she flicked the white tablecloth. "If mother and I hadn't such wonderful good health I suppose you'd come often enough here to give you real possession. Do you know, Mrs. Crozier," she added, with her wistful eyes vainly trying to be merely mischievous, "he once charged me five dollars for torturing me like a red Indian. I had put my elbow out of joint, and he put it in again with his knee and both hands, as though it was the wheel of a wagon and he was trying to put on a tire."

"Well, you were running round soon after!" answered the incorrigible joker. "But as for the five dollars, I only took it to keep you quiet. So long as you had a grievance you would talk in spite of everything, and you never were so surprised as when I took that five dollars."

"I've taken care never to dislocate my elbow since."

"No, not your *elbow!"* remarked the Young Doctor dryly and meaningly, and turned to Mona, who had now regained her composure.

"I sha'n't call you in to reduce the dislocation—that's the medical term, isn't it?" persisted Kitty, with fire in her eyes.

"What is the dislocation?" asked Mona, with a subtle, inquiring look, but as socially as though in her own drawing-room.

The Young Doctor smiled. "It's only her way of saying that my mind is unhinged and that I ought to be sent to a private hospital for two."

"No—only one," returned Kitty.

"Marriage means common catastrophe, doesn't it?" he asked quizzically.

"Generally it means that one only is permanently injured," replied Kitty, lifting a tumbler and looking through it at him as though to see if the glass were properly polished.

Mona was mystified. At first she thought there had been oblique references to her husband, but these remarks about marriage would certainly exclude him. Yet, would they exclude him? During the time in which Shiel's history was not known might there not have been—but no, it could not have been so, for it was Kitty who had sent the letter which had brought her to Askatoon.

"Are you going to be married—soon?" she asked of Kitty, with a friendly yet trembling smile, for her agitation was, after all, troubling every nerve.

"I've thought of it quite lately," responded Kitty calmly, seating herself now and looking straight into the eyes of the woman, who was suggesting more truth than she knew.

"May I congratulate you? Am I justified on such slight acquaintance? I am sure you have chosen wisely," was the smooth rejoinder.

Kitty did not shrink from looking Mona in the eyes. "I'm not ready to receive congratulations yet, and I'm not sure I've chosen wisely. Some of my family strongly disapprove. I can't help that, of course, and I may have to elope and take the consequences."

"It takes two to elope," interposed the Young Doctor, who thought that Kitty, in her humorous extravagance, was treading very dangerous ground indeed. He only thought of Crozier and Kitty; but Kitty was thinking of Crozier, but meaning John Sibley. Somehow she could not help playing with this torturing thing in the presence of the wife of the man who was the real "man in possession" so far as her life was concerned.

"But he is waiting on the door-step," replied Kitty daringly and referring only to John Sibley.

At that minute there was the crunch of gravel on the pathway and the sound of a quick footstep. Kitty and Mona were on their feet at once. Both recognized the step of Shiel Crozier. Presently the Young Doctor also recognized it, but in the presence of a situation so suddenly matured he rose with more deliberation.

At that instant a voice calling from the road arrested Crozier's steps to the open door of the room where they were. It was Jesse Bulrush asking a question. Crozier paused in his progress, and in the moment's time it gave, Kitty, with a swift look of inquiry and with a burst of the real soul in her, caught the hand of Crozier's wife and gave it a swift pressure. Then, with a face flushed and eyes that determinedly looked straight ahead of her, she left the room as the Young Doctor advanced to the doorway and stepped outside. Within ten feet of the door he met Crozier.

"How goes it, patient?" he said, standing in Crozier's way. Being a man who thought much and wisely for other people, he wanted to give the wife time to gather herself together.

"Right enough in your sphere of operations," answered Crozier.

"And not so right in other fields, eh?"

"I've come back after a fruitless hunt. They've got me, the thieves!" said Crozier, with a look which gave his long face an almost tragic austerity. Then suddenly the look changed, the medieval remoteness passed, and a thought flashed up into his eyes which made his expression alive with humor.

"Isn't it wonderful that just when a man feels he wants a rope to hang himself with, the rope isn't to be had?" he exclaimed. "Before he can lay his hands on it he wants to hang somebody else, and then he has to pause whether he will or no. Did I ever tell you the story of the old Irishwoman who lived down at Kenmare, in County Kerry? Well, she used to sit at her doorway and lament the sorrows of the world with a depth of passion that you'd think never could be assuaged. 'Oh, I fale so bad, I am so wake—oh, I do fale so bad,' she used to say. 'I wish some wan would take me by the ear and lade me round to the ould shebeen, and set me down, and fill a noggen of whisky and make me dhrink it—whether I would or no!' Whether I would or no I have to drink the cup of self-denial," Crozier continued, "though Bradley and his gang have closed every door against me here, and I've come back without what I went for at Aspen Vale, for my men were away. I've come back without what I went for, but I must just grin and bear it." He shrugged his shoulders and gave a great sigh.

"Perhaps you will find what you went for here," returned the Young Doctor meaningly.

"There's a lot here—enough to make a man think life worth while"—inside the room the wife shrank at the words, for she could hear all—"but I'm not thinking the thing I went to look for is here just the same."

"You never know your luck," was the reply. "'Ask and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you'!"

The long face blazed up with humor again. "Do you mean that I haven't asked *you* yet?" Crozier remarked, with a quizzical look, which had still that faint hope against hope which is a painful thing for a good man's eyes to see.

The Young Doctor laid a hand on Crozier's arm. "No, I didn't mean that, patient. I'm in that state when every penny I have is out to keep me from getting a fall. I'm in that Starwhon coal mine down at Bethbridge, and it's like a suction-pump. I couldn't borrow a thousand dollars myself now—I can't, or I'd stand in with you, Crozier. No, I can't help you a bit; but step inside. There's a room in this house where you got back your life by the help of a knife. There's another room in there where you may get back your fortune by the help of a wife."

Stepping aside he gave the wondering Crozier a slight push forward into the doorway, then left him and hurried round to the back of the house, where he hoped he might see Kitty.

The Young Doctor found Kitty pumping water on a pail of potatoes and stirring them with a broom-handle.

"A most unscientific way of cleaning potatoes," he said, as Kitty did not look at him. "If you put them in a trough where the water could run off, the dirt would go with the water, and you wouldn't waste time and intelligence, and your fingers would be cleaner in the end."

The only reply Kitty made was to flick the broom-head at him. It had been dipped in water and the spray from it slightly spattered his face.

"Will you never grow up?" he exclaimed as he applied a handkerchief to his ruddy face.

"I'd like you so much better if you were younger—will you never be young?" she asked.

"It makes a man old before his time

to have to meet you day by day and live near you."

"Why don't you try living *with* me?" she retorted.

"Ah, then, you meant me when you said to Mrs. Crozier that you were going to be married? Wasn't that a bit 'momentary,' as my mother's cook used to remark. I think we haven't 'kept company'—you and I."

"It's true you haven't been a beau of mine—but I'd rather marry you than be obliged to live with you," was the paradoxical retort.

"You have me this time," he said, trying in vain to solve her reply.

Kitty tossed her head. "No, I haven't got you this time, thank Heaven, and I don't want you; but I'd rather marry you than live with you, as I said. Isn't it the custom for really nice-minded people to marry to get rid of each other—for five years, or for ever and ever and ever."

"What a girl you are, Kitty Tynan!" he said reprovingly. He saw that she meant Crozier and his wife.

Kitty ceased her work for an instant and, looking away from him into the distance, said: "Three people said those same words to me all in one day a thousand years ago. It was Mr. Crozier, Jesse Bulrush, and my mother; and now you've said it a thousand years after; as with your inexpensive education and slow mind you'd be sure to do."

"I have an idea that Mrs. Crozier said the same to you also this very day. Did she—come, did she?"

"She didn't say, 'What a girl you are,' but in her mind she probably did say, 'What a vixen you are!'"

The Young Doctor nodded satirically. "If you continued as you began when coming from the station, I'm sure she did; and also I'm sure it wasn't wrong of her to say it."

"I wanted her to say it. That's why I uttered the too, too utter-things, as the comic-opera says. What else was there to do? I had to help cure her."

"To cure her of what, miss?"

"To cure her of herself, doctor-man."

The Young Doctor's look became graver. He wondered greatly at this young girl's sage instinct and penetration. "Of herself? Ah, yes, to think more of some one else than herself! That is—"

"Yes, that is love," Kitty answered, her head bent over the pail and stirring the potatoes hard.

"I suppose it is," he answered.

"I know it is," she returned.

"Is that why you are going to be married?" he asked quizzically.

"It will probably cure the man I marry of himself!" she retorted. "Oh, neither of us know what we are talking about—let's change the subject!" she added impatiently now, with a change of mood, as she poured the water off the potatoes.

There was a moment's silence in which they were both thinking of the same thing. "I wonder how it's all going inside there?" he remarked. "I hope all right, but I have my doubts."

"I haven't any doubt at all. It isn't going right," she answered ruefully; "but it has to be made go right."

"Whom do you think can do that?"

Kitty looked him frankly and decisively in the eyes. Her eyes had the look of a dreaming pietist for the moment. The deep-sea soul of her was awake. "I can do it if they don't break away altogether at once. I helped her more than you think. I told her I had opened that letter."

He gasped. "*Miss* Kitty Tynan—oh, my dear girl—that letter—you told her you had done such a thing, such—!"

"Don't *dear girl* me, if you please. I know what I am doing. I told her that and a great deal more. She won't leave this house the woman she was yesterday. She is having a quick cure—a cure while you wait."

"Perhaps he is cured of her," remarked the Young Doctor very gravely.

"No, no, the disease might have got headway, but it didn't," Kitty returned, her face turned away. "He became a little better; but he was never cured. That's the way with a man. He can never forget a woman he has once cared for, and he can go back to her half loving her; but it isn't the case with a woman. There's nothing so dead to a woman as a man when she's cured of him. The woman is never dead to the man, no matter what happens."

The Young Doctor regarded her with a strange, new interest and a puzzled surprise. "Sappho—Sappho, I wonder how it is you know these things," he exclaimed. "You are only a girl at best, or something of a boy-girl at worst, and yet you have, or think you have, got into those places which are reserved for the old-timers in life's game. You talk like an ancient dame."

Kitty smiled, though her eyes had a slumbering look as though she was half-dreaming. "That's the mistake most of you make—men and women. There's such a thing as instinct, and there's such a thing as keeping your eyes open."

"What did Mrs. Crozier say when you told her about opening that five-year-old letter? Did she hate you?"

Kitty nodded with wistful whimsicality. "For a minute she was like an industrious hornet. Then I made her see she wouldn't have been here at all if I hadn't opened it. That made her come down from her high horse, and she said that, considering my opportunities, I was not so much of an aboriginal after all."

"Now, look you, Sapphira, prospective wife of Ananias, she didn't say that, of course. Still it doesn't matter, does it? The point is, suppose he opens that letter now!"

"If he does, he'll probably not go with her. It was a letter that would send a man out with a scalping-knife. Still if Mr. Crozier had his land-deal through he might not read the letter as it really is. His brain wouldn't then be grasping what his eyes saw."

"He hasn't got his land-deal through. He told me so just now before he saw her."

"Then it's *ora pro nobis* — it's pray for us hard," rejoined Kitty sorrowfully. "Poor man from County Kerry!"

At that moment Mrs. Tynan came from the house, her face flushed, her manner slightly agitated. "John Sibley is here, Kitty—with two saddle-horses. He says you promised to ride with him to-day."

"I probably did," responded Kitty calmly. "It's a good day for riding, too. But John will have to wait. Please tell him to come back at six o'clock. There'll be plenty of time for an hour's ride before sundown."

"Are you lame, dear child?" asked her mother ironically. "Because if you're not, perhaps you'll be your own messenger. It's no way to treat a friend—or whatever you like to call him."

Kitty smiled tenderly at her mother. "Then would you mind telling him to come here, mother darling? I'm giving this doctor-man a prescription. Oh, please do what I ask you, mother! It is true about the prescription. It's not for himself; it's for the foreign people quarantined inside." She nodded towards the room where Shiel Crozier and his wife were shaping their fate.

As her mother disappeared with a gesture of impatience and the remark that she washed her hands of the whole Sibley business, the Young Doctor said to Kitty: "What is your prescription, Mademoiselle Sapphira? Suppose they come out of quarantine with a clean bill of health?"

"If they do that you needn't make up the prescription. But if Aspen Vale hasn't given him what he wanted, then Mr. Shiel Crozier will still be an exile from home and the angel in the house."

"What is the prescription? Out with your Sibylline leaves!"

"It's in that unopened letter. When the letter is opened you'll see it effervesce like a seidlitz powder."

"But suppose I am not here when the letter is opened?" he questioned.

"You must be here—you must. You'll stay now, if you please."

"I'm afraid I can't. I have patients waiting."

Kitty made an impetuous gesture of command. "There are two patients here who are at the crisis of their disease. You may be wanted to save a life any minute now."

"I thought that with your prescription you were to be the Esculapius."

"No, I'm only going to save the reputation of Esculapius by giving him a prescription got from a quack and given to a goose."

"Come, come, no names, slanderer. You are incorrigible. I believe you'd have your joke on your death-bed."

"I should if you were there. I should die laughing," Kitty retorted.

"There will be no death-bed for you,

miss. You'll be translated—no, that's not right—no one could translate you."

"God might—or a man I loved well enough not to marry him!"

There was a note of emotion in her laugh as she uttered the words. It did not escape the ear of the Young Doctor, who regarded her fixedly for a moment before he said: "I'm not sure that even He would be able to translate you. You speak your own language, and it's surely original. I am only just learning its alphabet. No one else speaks it. I have a fear that you'll be terribly lonely as you travel along the trail, Kitty Tynan."

A light of pleasure came into Kitty's eyes, though her face was a little drawn. "You really do think I'm original—that I'm myself and not like anybody else?" she asked him with a childlike eagerness.

"Almost more than any one I ever met," answered the Young Doctor gently; for he saw that she had her own great troubles, and he also saw now fully what this comedy or tragedy inside the house meant to her. "But you're terribly lonely — and that's why: because you are the only one of your kind."

"No, that's why I'm not going to be lonely," she said, nodding towards the corner of the house where John Sibley appeared.

Suddenly, with a gesture of confidence and almost of affection, she laid a hand on the Young Doctor's breast. "I've left the trail, doctor-man. I'm cutting across the prairie. Perhaps I shall reach camp and perhaps I sha'n't; but anyhow I'll know that I met one good man on the way. And I also saw a rest-house that I'd like to have stayed at; but the blinds were drawn and the door was locked."

There was a strange, eerie look in her face again as her eyes of soft umber dwelt on his for a moment; then she turned with a gay smile to John Sibley, who had seen her hand on the Young Doctor's chest without dismay; for the joy of Kitty was that she hid nothing, and, anyhow, the Young Doctor had a place of his own; and also, anyhow, Kitty did what she pleased. Once when she had visited the Coast the Governor had talked to her with great gusto and friendliness; and she had even gone so far as to touch his arm while, chuckling at her whimsicality, he listened to a story she told him of life at the railhead. And the Governor had patted her fingers in quite a fatherly way—or not, as the mind of the observer saw it; while subsequently his secretary had written verses to her.

"So you've been gambling again—you've broken your promise to me," she said reprovingly to Sibley, but with that wonderful, wistful laughter in her eyes.

Sibley looked at her in astonishment. "Who told you?" he asked. It had only happened the night before, and it didn't seem possible she could know.

He was quite right. It wasn't possible she could know, and she didn't know. She only divined.

"I knew when you made the promise you couldn't keep it; that's why I forgive you now," she added. "Knowing what I did about you, I oughtn't to have let you make it."

The Young Doctor saw in her words a meaning that John Sibley could never have guessed or understood, for it was a part of the story of Crozier's life reproduced—and with what a different ending!

CHAPTER XV

"MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM"

When Crozier stepped out of the bright sunlight into the shady living-room of the Tynan home, his eyes were clouded by the memory of his conference with Studd Bradley and his financial associates, and by the desolate feeling that the five years since he had left England had brought him nothing—nothing at all except a new manhood. But that he did not count an asset, because he had not himself taken account of this new capital. He had never been a vain or an introspective man in the philosophic sense, and he never had thought that he was of much account. He had lived long on his luck, and nothing had come of it—"nothing at all, at all," as he said to himself when he stepped inside the room where, unknown to him, his wife awaited him. So abstracted was he, so disturbed was his gaze (fixed on the inner thing) that he did not see the figure in blue and white over against the wall, her hand on the big armchair once belonging to Tyndall Tynan, and now used always by Shiel Crozier, "the white-haired boy of the Tynan sanatorium," as Jesse Bulrush had called him.

There was a strange timidity, and a fear not so strange, in Mona's eyes as she saw her husband enter with that quick step which she had so longingly remembered after he had fled from her; but of which she had taken less account when he was with her at Lammis long ago—when Crozier of Lammis was with her long ago. How tall and shapely he was! How large he loomed with the light behind him! How shadowed his face and how distant the look in his eyes!

Somehow the room seemed too small for him, and yet he had lived in this very house for four years and more, he had slept in the next room all that time, had eaten at this table and sat in this very chair—Mrs. Tynan had told her that—for this long time, like the master of a household. With that far-away, brooding look in his face, he seemed in one sense as distant from her as when she was in London in those dreary, desolate years with no knowledge of his whereabouts, a widow in every sense save one; but in her acts—that had to be said for her—a wife always and not a widow. She had not turned elsewhere, though there had been temptation enough to do so.

Crozier advanced to the centre of the room, even to the table laid for dinner, before he was conscious of some one in the room, of a figure by the chair. For a moment he stood still, startled as though he had seen a vision, and his sight became blurred. When it cleared, Mona was a step nearer to him, and then he saw her clearly, and he caught his breath as though life had burst upon him with some staggering revelation. If she had been a woman of genius, as in her way Kitty Tynan was, she would have spoken before he had a chance to do so. Instead, she wished to see how he would greet her, to hear what he would say. She was afraid of him now. It was not her gift to do the right thing by perfect instinct; she had to think things out; and so she did now. But it has to be said for her that she also had a strange, deep sense of apprehension and anxiety in the presence of the man whose arms had held her fast, and then let her go for so bitter a length of time, in which her pride was lacerated and her heart brought low. She did not know how she was going to be met now, and a womanly shyness held her back. If she had said one word—his name only—it might have made a world of difference to them both at that moment; for he was tortured by failure, and at the moment when hope was gone, here was the woman whom he had left in order to force gifts from fate to bring himself back to her.

"You—you here!" he exclaimed hoarsely. He did not open his arms to her or go a step nearer to her. The look on his face was that of blank amazement, of confusion, of mingled memory and stark realization. This was a turn of affairs for which he had made no calculation. There had ever been the question of his return to her, but never of her coming to him. Yet here she was *débonnaire* and fresh and perfectly appointed—and ah, so terribly neat and spectacularly finessed! Here she was with all that expert formality which, in the old days, had been a reproach to his loosely-swung life and person, to his careless, almost slovenly but well-brushed, cleanly and polished ease—not like his wife, as though he had been poured out of a mould and set up to dry. He was not tailor-made, and she had even been so exact that it was as though she had been crystallized, clothes and all—a perfect crystal, yet a crystal. It was this very perfection, so charming to see, but in a sense so inhuman, which had ever dismayed him. "What should I be doing in the home of an angel!" he had exclaimed to himself in the old home at Lammis.

Truth is, he ought never to have had such a feeling, and he would not have had it, if she had diffused the radiance of love, which would have made her outer perfectness mere slovenliness beside her inner charm and magnetism. Very little of all this passed through Crozier's mind, as with confused vision he looked at her. He had borne the ordeal of the witness-box in the Logan Trial with superb coolness; he had been in physical danger over and over again, and had kept his head; he had never been faced by a human being who embarrassed him — except his own wife!

"There is no fear like that of one's own wife" was the saying of an ancient philosopher, and Crozier had proved it true; not because of errors committed, but because he was as sensitive as a girl of sensibility; because he felt that his wife did not understand him, and he was ever in fear of doing the wrong thing, while eager beyond telling to please her. After all, during the past five years, parted from her while loving her, there had still been a feeling of relief unexplainable to himself in not having to think whether he was pleasing her or not, or to reproach himself constantly that he was failing to conform to her standard.

"YOU—YOU HERE, MONA!" HE EXCLAIMED HOARSELY

"How did you come—why? How did you know?" he asked helplessly, as she made no motion to come nearer, as she kept looking at him with an expression in her eyes wholly unfamiliar to him—yet not wholly unfamiliar, for it appeared to belong somehow to the days when he courted her, when she seemed to have got nearer to him than in the more intimate relations of married life.

"Is—is that all you have to say to me, Shiel?" she asked, with a swelling note of feeling in her voice; while there was also emerging in her look elusive pride which might quickly become sharp indignation. That her deserter should greet her so after five years of such offense to a woman's pride, as might entitle her to become a rebel against man and matrimony, was too cruel to be borne. This feeling suddenly became alive in her, in spite of a joy in her heart different from that which she had ever known; in defiance of the fact that now that they were together once more, what would she not do to prevent their being driven apart again!

"After abandoning me for five years, is that all you have to say to me, Shiel? After I have suffered before the world—"

He threw up his arms with a passionate gesture. "The world," he exclaimed—"the devil take the world! I've been out of it for five years, and well out of it. What do I care for the world!"

She drew herself up in a spirit of defense. "It isn't what you care for the world, but I had to live in it—alone, and because I was alone, I was sneered at. It has been easy enough for you—you were where no one knew you. You had your freedom"—she advanced to the table and, as though unconsciously, he did the same, and they gazed at each other over the white linen and its furnishings—"and no one was saying that your wife had left you for this or that, because of her bad conduct or of yours. Either way it was not what was fair and just; yet I had to bear and suffer, not you. There is no pain like it. There I was in misery and—"

A bitter smile came to his lips. "A woman can endure a good deal when she has all life's luxuries in her grasp. Did you ever think, Mona, that a man must suffer as much as can be endured when he goes out into a world where he knows no one, penniless, with no trade, no profession, nothing except his own helpless self? He might have stayed behind among the luxuries that belonged to another, and eaten from the hand of his wife's charity, but" (all the pride and pain of the old situation rose up in him, impelled by the brooding of the years of separation, heightened by the fact that he was no nearer to his goal of financial independence of her than he was when he left London five years before) "why, do you think, no matter what I've done, broken a pledge or not, been in the wrong a thousand times as much as I was, that I'd be fed by the hand of one to whom I had given a pledge and broken it? Do you think that I'd give her the chance to say aloud or to herself, day by day, 'I forgive you; I will give you your food and clothes and board and bed, but if you are not good in the future, I will be very, very angry with you.' Do you think—?"

His face was flaming now. The pent-up-flood of remorse and resentment and pride and love—the love that tore itself in pieces because it had not the pride and self-respect which independence as to money gives—broke forth in him, fresh as he was from a brutal interview with the gang whom he had given the chance to make much money, and who were now, for a few thousand dollars, trying to cudgel him out of his one opportunity to regain a lost place in his lost world.

"I live—I live like this," he continued, with a gesture that embraced the room where they were, "and I have one room to myself where I have lived over four years"—he pointed to it. "Do you think I would choose this and all it means, its poverty and its crudeness, its distance from all I ever had and all my people had, if I could have stood the other thing — a pauper taking pennies from his own wife? I had had taste enough of it while I had a little something left; but when I lost everything on Flamingo, and I was a beggar, I knew I could not stand the whole thing. I could not, would not, go under the poor-law and accept you, with the lash of a broken pledge in your hand, as my guardian. So that's why I left, and that's why I stay here, and that's why I'm going to stay here, Mona."

He looked at her firmly, though his face had that illumination which the spirit in his eyes—the Celtic fire drawn through the veins of his ancestors gave to all he did and felt; and now as in a dream he saw little things in her he had never seen before. He saw that a little strand of her beautiful dark hair had broken away from its ordered place and hung prettily against the rosy, fevered skin of her cheek just beside her ear. He saw that there were no rings on her fingers save one, and that was her wedding-ring — and she had always been fond of wearing rings! He noted involuntarily that in her agitation the white tulle at her breast had been disturbed into pretty disarray, and that there was neither brooch nor necklace at her breast or throat.

"If you stay, I am going to stay, too," she declared in an even yet almost passionate voice, and she spoke with deliberation and a look which left no way open to doubt. She was now a valiant little figure making a fight for happiness.

"I can't prevent that," he responded stubbornly.

She made a quick, appealing motion of her hands. "Would you prevent it? Aren't you glad to see me? Don't you love me any more? You used to love me. In spite of all, you used to love me. Even though you hated my money and I hated your gambling — your betting on horses. You used to love me—I was sure you did then. Don't you love me now, Shiel?"

A gloomy look passed over his face. Memory of other days was admonishing him. "What is the good of one loving when the other doesn't? And, anyhow, I made up my mind five years ago that I would not live on my wife. I haven't done so, and I don't mean to do so. I don't mean to take a penny of your money. I should curse it to damnation if I was living on it. I'm not, and I don't mean to do so."

"Then I'll stay here and work, too, without it," she urged, with a light in her eyes which they had never known.

He laughed mirthlessly. "What could you do?—you never did a day's work in your life!"

"You could teach me how to work, Shiel."

His jaw jerked in a way it had when he was incredulous. "You used to say I was only—mark you, *only* a dreamer and a sportsman. Well, I'm no longer a dreamer and a sportsman; I'm a practical man.

I've done with dreaming and sportsmanship. I can look at a situation as it is, and—"

" You are dreaming—but yes, you are dreaming still," she interjected. " And you are a sportsman still, but it is the sport of a dreamer, and a mad dreamer, too. Shiel, in spite of all my faults in the past, I come to you, to stay with you, to live on what you earn if you like, if it's only a loaf of bread a day. I—I don't care about my money. I don't care about the luxuries which money can buy; I can do without them if I have you. Am I not to stay, and won't you—won't you kiss me, Shiel?"

She came close to him—came round the table till she stood within a few feet of him.

There was one trembling instant when he would have taken her hungrily into his arms, but as though some evil spirit interposed with malign purpose, there came the sound of feet on the gravel outside, and the figure of a man darkened the doorway. It was Augustus Burlingame, whose face as he saw Mona Crozier took on an ironical smile.

" Yes—what do you want?" inquired Crozier quietly.

" A few words with Mr. Crozier on business, if he's not too much occupied?"

" What business?"

" I am acting for Messrs. Bradley, Willingden, Baxter, and Simmons."

The cloud darkened on Crozier's face. His lips tightened, his face hardened. " I will see you in a moment—wait outside, please," he added, as Burlingame made as though to step inside. " Wait at the gate," he added quietly, but with undisguised antipathy.

The moment of moments for Mona and himself had passed. All the bitterness of defeat was on him again. All the humiliation of undeserved failure to accomplish what had been the dear desire of five years bore down his spirit now. Suddenly he had a suspicion that his wife had received information of his whereabouts from this very man, Burlingame. Had not the Young Doctor said that Burlingame had written to lawyers in the old land to get information concerning him? Was it not more than likely that he had given his wife the knowledge which had brought her here?

When Burlingame had disappeared he turned to Mona. " Who told you I was here? Who wrote to you?" he asked darkly. The light had died away from his face. It was ascetic in its lonely gravity now.

" Your doctor cabled to Castlegarry and Miss Tynan wrote to me."

A faint flush spread over Crozier's face. " How did Miss Tynan know where to write?"

Mona had told the truth at once because she felt it was the only way. Now, however, she was in a position where she must either tell him that Kitty had opened that still sealed letter from herself to him which he had carried all these years; or else tell him an untruth. She had no right to tell him what Kitty had told her. There was no other way save to lie.

" How should I know? It was enough for me to get her letter," she replied.

" At Castlegarry?"

What was there to do? She must keep faith with Kitty, who had given her this sight of her husband again.

" Forwarded from Lammis," she said. " It reached me before the doctor's cable."

So it was Kitty — Kitty Tynan — who had brought his wife to this new home from which he had been trying so hard to get back to the old home. Kitty—Kitty, the angel of the house!

" You wrote me a letter which drove me from home," he said heavily.

" No—no—no," she protested. " It was not that. I know it was not that. It was my money—it was that which drove you away. You have just said so."

" You wrote me a hateful letter," he persisted. " You didn't want to see me. You sent it to me by your kind, sweet young brother!"

Her eyes flashed. " My letter did not drive you away. It couldn't have. You went because you did not love me—that and my money—not the letter, not the letter."

Somehow she had a curious feeling that the very letter which contained her bitter and hateful reproaches might save her yet. The fact that he had not opened it—well, she must see Kitty again. Her husband was in a dark mood. She must wait. She knew that her fortunate moment had passed when the rogue Burlingame appeared. She must wait for another.

"Shall I go now? You want to see that man outside. Shall I go, Shiel?" She was very pale now, very quiet, steady, and gentle.

"I must hear what that fellow has to say. It is business—important," he replied. "It may mean—anything—everything, or nothing."

As she left the room he had an impulse to call her back, but he conquered it.

CHAPTER XVI

"'TWAS FOR YOUR PLEASURE YOU CAME HERE, YOU SHALL GO BACK FOR MINE"

For a moment Crozier stood looking at the closed doorway through which Mona had gone, with a look of repentant affection in his eyes; but as the thought of his own helpless insolvency and broken hopes flashed across his mind, a look of dark and harassed reflection shadowed his face. He turned to the front doorway with a savage gesture. The mutilated dignity of his manhood, the broken pride of a lifetime, the bitterness in his heart need not be held in check in dealing with the man who waited to give him a last thrust of enmity.

He left the house. Burlingame was seated on the stump of a tree which had been made into a seat.

"Come to my room if you have business with me," Crozier said sharply.

As they went Crozier swung aside from the front door toward the corner of the house.

"The back way?" asked Burlingame with a sneer.

"You ought to feel that familiar," was the smarting reply. "In any case, you are not welcome in Mrs. Tynan's part of the house. My room is my own, and I should prefer you within four walls while we do our business."

Burlingame's face changed color slightly, for the tone of Crozier's voice, the grimness of his manner, suggested an abnormal condition. Burlingame was not a brave man physically. He had never lived the outdoor life, though he had lived so much among outdoor people. He was that rare thing in a new land, a decadent, a connoisseur in vice, a lover of opium and morphia and of liquor. He was young enough yet not to be incapacitated by it. His face and hands were white and a little flabby, and he wore his hair rather long, which, it is said, accounts for much weakness in some men, on the assumption that long hair wastes the strength! But Burlingame quickly remembered the attitude of the lady—Crozier's wife, he was certain—and her husband in the dining-room a few moments before, and to his suspicious eyes it was not characteristic of a happy family party. No doubt this grimness of Crozier was due to domestic trouble and not wholly to his own presence. Still, he felt softly for the tiny pistol he always carried in his big waistcoat-pocket, and it comforted him.

Beyond the corner of the house Crozier paused and took a key from his pocket. It opened a side-door to his own room, seldom used, since it was always so pleasant in this happy home to go through the main living-room, which every one liked so much that, though it was not the dining-room, it was constantly used as such, and though it was not the parlor, it was also its constant substitute. Opening the door Crozier stepped aside to let Burlingame pass. It was over two years since Burlingame had been in this room, and then it had been without invitation. His inquisitiveness had led him to enter it in the old days when he lived in the house—before he was ejected from it.

Entering now, he gave it quick scrutiny. It was clear that he was looking for something in particular. He was, in fact, looking for signs of its occupancy by another than Shiel Crozier—tokens of a woman's presence. There was, however, no sign at all of a woman's presence, though there were signs of a woman's care and attention in a number of little things—homelike, solicitous, perhaps affectionate care and attention. Certainly the spotless pillows, the pretty curtains, the pincushion, and charmingly valanced bed and shelves, cheap though the material was, showed a woman's very friendly care. When he lived in that house there were no such little attentions paid to him! It was his experience that where such attentions went other things accompanied them. A sensualist himself, it was not conceivable to him that men and women could be under the same roof without "passages of sympathetic friendship and tokens of affinity"—that was a phrase which he had often used when pursuing his own sort of happiness.

His swift scrutiny of the room showed that Crozier's wife had no habitation here, and that gave him his cue for what the French call "the reconstruction of the crime." It certainly was clear that, as he had suggested at the Logan Trial, there was serious trouble in the Crozier family of two, and the offender must naturally be the man who had flown, not the woman who had stayed. Here was the logic of facts.

His suggestive glance, the look in his face, did not escape the eye of Crozier, who read it all aright; and a primitive expression of natural antipathy passed across his medieval face, making it almost inquisitorial in its dominant effect.

"Will you wish to sit?" he said, however, with the courtesy he could never avoid; and he pointed to a chair beside the little table in the centre of the room.

As Burlingame sat down he noticed on the table a crumpled handkerchief. It had lettering in the corner. He spread it out slightly with his fingers, as though abstractedly thinking of what he was about to say. The initial in the corner was *K*. Kitty had left it on the table while she was talking to Mrs. Crozier a half-hour before. No matter what Burlingame actually thought or believed, he could not now resist picking up the handkerchief and looking at it with a mocking smile. It was too good a chance to miss. He still hugged to his evil heart the humiliating remembrance of his expulsion from this house, the share which Crozier had had in it, and the things which Crozier had said to him then. He had his Crozier now between the upper and the nether mill-stones, and he meant to grind him to the flour of utter abasement. It was clear that the arrival of Mrs. Crozier had brought him no relief, for Crozier's face was not that of a man who had found and opened a casket of good fortune.

"Rather dangerous that, in the bed-room of a family man!" he said, picking up the handkerchief and looking suggestively from the lettering in the corner to Crozier. He laid it down again, smiling detestably.

Crozier calmly picked up the handkerchief, saw the lettering, then went quietly to the door of the room and called Mrs. Tynan's name once or twice. Presently she appeared. Crozier beckoned her into the room. When she entered he closed the door behind her.

"Mrs. Tynan," he said, "this fellow found your daughter's handkerchief on my table, and he has said regarding it, 'Rather dangerous that, in the bed-room of a family man.' What would you like me to do with him?"

Mrs. Tynan walked up to Burlingame with the look of a woman of the Commune and said: "If I had a son I would disown him if he didn't mangle you till your wife would never know you again, you loathsome thing. There isn't a man or woman in Askatoon who would believe your sickening slanders, for every one knows what you are. How dare you enter this house? If the men of Askatoon had any manhood in them they would tar-and-feather you. My girl is as good as any girl that ever lived, and you know it. Now go out of here—now!"

Crozier intervened quietly. "Mrs. Tynan, I asked him in here because it is my room. I have some business with him. When it is over, then he shall go, and we will fumigate the place. Regarding the tar-and-feathers, you might leave that to me. I think I can arrange it."

"I'll turn the hose on him as he goes out, if you don't mind," the irate mother exclaimed as she left the room.

Crozier nodded. "Well, that would be appropriate, Mrs. Tynan, but it wouldn't cleanse him. He is the original leopard whose spots are there for all time."

By this time Burlingame was on his feet, and a look of craft and fear and ugly meaning was in his face. Morally he was a coward, physically he was a coward, but he had in his pocket a weapon which gave him a feeling of superiority in the situation, and after a night of extreme self-indulgence, he was in a state of irritation of the nerves which gave him what the searchers after excuses for ungoverned instincts and acts call "brain-storms." He had always had sense enough to know that his amorous escapades would get him into trouble one day, and he had always carried the little pistol which was now so convenient to his hand. It gave him a fictitious courage which he would not have had unarmed against almost any man—or woman—in Askatoon.

"PUT IT IN MY HAND," INSISTED CROZIER

"You get a woman to do your fighting for you," he said hatefully. "You have to drag her in. It was you I meant to challenge, not the poor girl young enough to be your daughter." His hand went to his waistcoat pocket. Crozier saw and understood.

Suddenly Crozier's eyes blazed. The abnormal in him—the Celtic strain always at variance with the normal, an almost ultra-natural attendant of it—awoke like a storm in the tropics. His face became transformed, alive with a passion uncanny in its recklessness and purpose. It was a brain-storm indeed, but it had behind it a normal power, a moral force which was not to be resisted.

"None of your sickly melodrama here. Take out of your pocket the pistol you carry and give it to me," Crozier growled. "You are not to be trusted. The habit of thinking you would shoot somebody sometime—somebody you had injured—might become too much for you to-day, and then I should have to kill you, and for your wife's sake I don't want to do that. I always feel sorry for a woman with a husband like you. You could never shoot me. You couldn't be quick enough, but you might try. Then I should end you, and there'd be another trial; but the lawyer who defended me would not have to cross-examine any witness about your character. It is too well known, Burlingame. Out with it—the pistol!" he added, standing menacingly over the cowardly lawyer.

In a kind of stupor under the storm that was breaking above him Burlingame slowly drew out of a capacious waistcoat-pocket his tiny but powerful pistol of the most modern make.

"Put it in my hand," insisted Crozier, his eyes on the other's.

The flabby hand laid the weapon in

Crozier's lean and strenuous fingers. Crozier calmly withdrew the cartridges and then tossed the weapon back on the table.

"Now we have equality of opportunity," he remarked quietly. "If you think you would like to repeat any slander you have uttered, do it now; and in a moment or two Mrs. Tynan can turn the hose on the floor of this room."

"I want to get to business," said Burlingame sullenly, as he took from his pocket a paper.

Crozier nodded. "I can imagine your haste," he remarked. "You need all the fees you can get to pay Belle Bingley's bills."

Burlingame did not wince. He made no reply to the challenge that he was the chief supporter of a certain wanton thereabouts.

"The time for your option to take ten thousand dollars' worth of shares in the syndicate is up," he said; "and I am instructed to inform you that Messrs. Bradley, Willingden, Baxter & Simmons propose to take over your unpaid shares and to complete the transaction without you."

"Who informed Messrs. Bradley, Willingden, Baxter & Simmons that I am not prepared to pay my share?" asked Crozier sharply.

"The time is up," surlily replied Burlingame. "It is assumed you can't take up your shares, and that you don't want to do so. The time is up," he added emphatically, and he tapped the paper spread before him on the table.

Crozier's eyes half closed in an access of stubbornness and hatred. "You are not to assume anything whatever," he declared. "You are to accommodate yourself to actual facts. The time is not up. It is not up till midnight, and any action taken to-day on any other assumption will give grounds for damages."

Crozier spoke without passion and with a cold-blooded insistence not lost on Burlingame. Taking down a calendar from the wall, he laid it beside the paper on the table before the too eager lawyer. "Examine the dates," he said. "At twelve o'clock to-night Messrs. Bradley, Willingden, Baxter & Simmons are free to act, if the money is not at the disposal of the syndicate by then; but till then my option is indefeasible. Does that meet the case or not?"

"It meets the case," said Burlingame in a morose voice, rising. "If you can produce the money before the stroke of midnight, why can't you produce it now? What's the good of bluffing! It can do no good in the end. Your credit—"

"My credit has been stopped by your friends," interrupted Crozier, "but my resources are not."

"Midnight is not far off," viciously remarked Burlingame as he made for the door.

Crozier intercepted him. "One word with you on a more difficult business before you go," he said. "The tar-and-feathers for which Mrs. Tynan asks will be yours at any moment that I raise my hand in Askatoon. There are enough women alone who would do it."

"Talk of that after midnight," sneered Burlingame desperately as the door was opened for him by Crozier.

"You had better not go out by the front gate," remarked Crozier scornfully. "Mrs. Tynan is a woman of her word, and the hose is handy."

A moment later, with contemptuous satisfaction, he saw Burlingame climb the picket-fence at the side of the house.

Turning back into the room he threw up his arms. "Midnight—midnight—my God, where am I to get the money! I must—I must have it. I'll never, never take it from *her*. I'll fight it through alone. It's the only way back."

Sitting down at the table he dropped his head into his hands and shut his eyes in utter dejection.

"Mona—by Heaven, no!" he said once, and clenched his hands at his temples and sat on and on unmoving.

CHAPTER XVII

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT?

For a full half hour Crozier sat buried in dark reflection, then he slowly raised his head, and for a minute looked round dazedly. His absorption had been so great that for a moment he was like one who had awakened upon unfamiliar things.

As when in a dream of the night the history of a year will flash past like a ray of light, so for the bad half hour in which Crozier had given himself up to despair, his mind had travelled through an incongruous series of incidents of his past life, and had also revealed pictures of solution after solution of his present troubles.

He had that gift of visualization which makes life an endless procession of pictures which allure, or which wear the nature into premature old age. The last picture flashing before his eyes, as he sat there alone, was of himself and his elder brother, Garnett, now master of Castlegarry, racing ponies to reach the lodge-gates before they closed for the night, after a day of disobedience and truancy. He remembered how Garnett had given him the better pony of the two, so that the younger brother, who would be more heavily punished if they were locked out, should have the better chance. And Garnett, if odd in manner and character, had always been a true sportsman though not a lover of sport.

If—if—why had he never thought of Garnett? Garnett could help him and he would do so. He would let Garnett stand in with him—take one-third of the profits in the syndicate. Yes, he must ask Garnett to see him through. Then it was that he lifted his head from his hands, and his mind awakened out of a dream as real as though he had actually been asleep. Garnett—alas! Garnett was thousands of miles away, and he had not heard from him for five years. Still, he knew the master of Castlegarry was alive, for he had seen him mentioned in a chance number of *The Morning Post* lately come to his hands. What avail! Garnett was at Castlegarry, and at midnight his chance of fortune and a new life would be gone. Then, penniless, he would have to face Mona again; and what would come of that he could not see, would not try to see. There was an alternative he would not attempt to face until after midnight, when this crisis in his life would be over. Beyond midnight was a darkness which he would not now try to pierce. As his eyes again became accommodated to his surroundings a look of determination, the determination of the true fatalist, the true gambler, came into his face. The real gambler never gives in till all is gone; never gives up till after the last throw of the last penny of cash or credit; for he has seen such innumerable times the thing come right and good fortune extend a friendly hand with the last throw of all.

Suddenly he remembered—saw—a scene in the gambling rooms at Monte Carlo on the only visit he had ever paid to the place. He had played constantly, and had won each day more or less. Then his fortune turned and he lost and lost each day. At last, one evening, he walked up to a table and said to the croupier: "When was zero up last?" The croupier answered, "Not for an hour." Forthwith he began to put money on zero and on nothing else. For two hours he put money at each turn of the wheel on zero. For two hours he lost. Increasing his stake, which had begun at five francs and had risen at length to five louis, he still coaxed the unresponsive zero. Finally midnight came, and he was the only person playing at the table. All others had gone or had ceased to play. These stayed to watch the "mad Inglesi," as a foreigner called him, knocking his head against the footstool of an unresponsive god of chance. The croupiers watched also with somewhat disdainful, somewhat pitying interest, this last representative of a class who have an insane notion that the law of chances is in their favor if they can stick it out long enough. And how often had they seen the stubborn challenger of a black demon, who would not appear according to the law of chances, leave the table ruined forever.

Smiling, Crozier had played on till he had but thirty louis left. Counting them over with a cheerful exactness, he rose up, lit a cigarette, placed the thirty louis on zero with a cynical precision, and with a gay smile kissed his hand to the refractory Nothing and said, "You've got it all, Zero—*bon soir! Bon soir*, Zero!" Then he had buttoned his coat and turned away to seek the cooler air of the Mediterranean. He had gone but a step or two, his head half-playfully turned to the table where the dwindling onlookers stood watching the wheel spin round, when suddenly he heard the croupier cry, "Zero!"

Smilingly he came back to the table and picked up the thousand and more louis he had won—won by his last throw and with his last available coin.

As the scene passed before him now he got to his feet and, with that look of the visionary in his eyes, which those only know who have watched the born gamester, said, " I'll back my hand till the last throw!"

Then it was, as his eyes gazed in front of him dreamily, he saw the card on his mirror bearing the words, " Courage, soldier!"

With a deepening flame in his eyes he went over and gazed at it long. At length he reached out and touched the writing with a caressing finger.

" Kitty—Kitty, how great you are!" he said. Then as he turned to the outer door a softness came into his face, stole up into his brilliant eyes and dimmed them with a tear. " What a hand to hold in the dark —the dark of life!" he said aloud. " Courage, soldier," he added as he opened the door by which he had entered, through which Burlingame had gone, and strode away towards the town of Askatoon, feeling somehow in his heart that before midnight his luck would turn.

From the dining-room Kitty had watched him go. " Courage, soldier!" she whispered after him, and she laughed; but almost immediately she threw her head up with a gasping sigh, and when it was lowered again two tears were stealing down her cheeks.

With an effort she conquered herself, wiped away the tears, and said aloud with a whimsical but none the less pitiful self-reproach, " Kitty—Kitty Tynan, what a fool you are!"

Entering the room Crozier had left, she went to the desk with the green-baize top, opened it, and took out the fateful letter which Mona Crozier had written to her husband five years ago. Putting it into her pocket she returned to the dining-room. She stood there for a moment with her chin in her hands and deep reflection in her eyes, and then, going to the door of her mother's sitting-room, she opened it and beckoned. A moment later Mrs. Crozier and the Young Doctor entered the dining-room and sat down at a motion from her. Presently she said:

" Mrs. Crozier, I have here the letter your husband received from you five years ago in London."

Mrs. Crozier flushed. She had been masterful by nature, and she had had her way very much in life. To be dominated in the most intimate things of her life by this girl was not easy to be borne; but she realized that Kitty had been a friend indeed, even if not obviously conventional. In response to Kitty's remark now she inclined her head.

" Well, you have told us that you and your husband haven't made it up. That is so, isn't it?" Kitty continued.

" If you wish to put it that way," answered Mona, stiffening a little in spite of herself.

" P'r'aps I don't put it very well, but it is the stony fact, isn't it, Mrs. Crozier?"

Mona hesitated a moment, then answered: " He is very upset concerning the land syndicate, and he has a quixotic idea that he cannot take money from me to help him carry it through."

" I don't quite know what quixotic means," rejoined Kitty dryly. " If it wasn't understood while you lived together that what was one's was the other's, that it was all in one purse, and that you shut your eyes to the name on the purse and took it as you wanted, I don't see how you could expect him, after your five years' desertion, to take money from you now."

" *My* five years' desertion!" exclaimed Mona. Surely this girl was more than reckless in her talk.

Kitty was not to be put down. " If you don't mind plain speaking, he was always with you, but you weren't always with him in those days. This letter showed that." She tapped it on her thumb-nail. " It was only when he had gone and you saw what you had lost, that you came back to him—in heart, I mean. Well, if you didn't go away with him when he went, and you wouldn't have gone unless he had ordered you to go—and he wouldn't do that—it's clear you deserted him, since you did that which drove him from home, and you stayed there instead of going with him. I've worked it out, and it is certain you deserted him five years ago. Desertion doesn't mean a sea of water between, it means an ocean of self-will and love-me-first between. If you hadn't deserted him, as this letter shows, he wouldn't have been here. I expect he told you so, and if he did, what did you say to him?"

The Young Doctor's eyes were full of decorous mirth and apprehension, for such logic and such impudence as Kitty's was like none he had ever heard. Yet it was commanding, too.

Kitty caught the look in his eyes and blazed up. "Isn't what I said correct? Isn't it all true and logical? And if it is why do you sit there looking so superior?"

The Young Doctor made a gesture of mock and deprecating apology. "It's all true, and it's logical, too, if you stand on your head when you think it. But whether it is logical or not, it is your conclusion, and as you've taken the thing in hand to set it right, it is up to you now. We can only hold hard and wait."

With a shrug of her graceful shoulders, Kitty turned again to Mrs. Crozier, who intervened hastily, saying: "I did not have a chance of saying to him all I wished. Of course he could not take my money, but there was his own money! I was going to tell him about that, but just then the lawyer, Mr. Burlingame—"

"They all call him 'Gus' Burlingame. He doesn't get the civility of *Mr.* here in Askatoon," interposed Kitty.

Mona made an impatient gesture. "If you will listen, I want to tell you about Mr. Crozier's money. He thinks he has no money, but he has. He has a good deal."

She paused, and the Young Doctor and Kitty leaned forward eagerly. "Well, but go on," said Kitty. "If he has money he must have it to-day, and now. Certainly he doesn't know of it. He thinks he is broke—dead broke—and there'd be a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for him if he could put up ten thousand dollars to-night. If I were you I wouldn't hide it from him any longer."

Mona got to her feet in anger. "If you would give me a chance to explain, I would do so," she said, her lips trembling. "Unfortunately, I am in your hands, but please give me credit for some intelligence—and some heart. In any case I shall not be bullied."

The Young Doctor almost laughed outright, despite the danger of the situation. He was not prepared for Kitty's reply and the impulsive act that marched with it. In an instant Kitty had caught Mona Crozier's hand and pressed it warmly. "I was only doing what I've seen lawyers do," she said eagerly. "I've got something that I want you to do, and I've been trying to work up to it. That's all. I'm not as mean and bad-mannered as you think me. I really do care what happens to him—to you both," she hastened to add.

Struggling to keep back her tears, and in a low voice Mona rejoined: "I meant to have told him what I'm going to tell you now. I couldn't say anything about the money belonging to him till I had told him how it came to be his."

After a moment's pause she continued: "He told you all about the race which Flamingo lost, and about that letter." She pointed to the letter which Kitty still carried in her hand. "Well, that letter was written under the sting of bitter disappointment. I was vain. I was young. I did not understand as I do now. If you were not such good friends — of his — I could not tell you this. It seemed to me that by breaking his pledge he showed he did not care for me; that he thought he could break a sacred pledge to me, and it didn't matter. I thought it was treating me lightly — to do it so soon after the pledge was given. I was irritated, angry. I felt we weren't as we might be, and I felt, too, that I must be at fault; but I was so proud that I didn't want to admit it, I suppose, when he did give me a grievance. It was all so mixed. I was shocked at his breaking his pledge, I was so vexed that our marriage hadn't been the success it might have been; and I think I was a little mad."

"That is not the monopoly of only one of your sex," interposed the Young Doctor dryly. "If I were you I wouldn't apologize for it. You speak to a sister in like distress."

Kitty's eyes flamed up, but she turned her head, as though some licensed libertine of speech had had his say, and looked with friendly eyes at Mona. " Yes, yes—please go on," she urged.

" When I wrote that letter I had forgotten what I had done the day before the race. I had gone into my husband's room to find some things I needed from the drawer of his dressing-table; and far at the back of a drawer I found a crumpled-up roll of ten-pound notes. It was fifty pounds altogether. I took the notes—"

She paused a moment and the room became very still. Both her listeners were sure that they were approaching a thing of deep importance.

In a lower voice Mona continued: " I don't know what possessed me, but perhaps it was that the things he did of which I disapproved most had got a hold on me in spite of myself. I said to myself: 'I am going to the Derby. I will take the fifty pounds, and I'll put it on a horse for Shiel.' He had talked so much to my brother about Flamingo and I had seen him go wrong so often, that I had a feeling if I put it on a horse that Shiel particularly condemned, it would probably win. He had been wrong nearly every time for two years. It was his money, and if it won, it would make him happy; and if it didn't win, well, he didn't know the money existed—I was sure of that, and, anyhow, I could replace it. I put it on a horse he condemned utterly, but which one or two people spoke well of. You know what happened to Flamingo. While at Epsom I heard from friends that Shiel was present at the race, though he had said he would not go. Later I learned that he had lost heavily. Then I saw him in the distance paying out money and giving bills to the bookmakers. It made me very angry. I don't think I was quite sane. Most women are like that at times."

" As I said," remarked the Young Doctor, his face mirthfully alive. Here was a situation indeed.

" So I wrote him that letter," Mona went on. " I had forgotten all about the money I put on the outsider which won the race. As you know, I was called away to my sick sister that evening, and the money I won with Shiel's fifty pounds was not paid to me till after Shiel had gone."

" How much was it?" asked Kitty breathlessly.

" Four thousand pounds."

Kitty exclaimed so loudly that she smothered her mouth with a hand. " Why, he only needs for the syndicate two thousand pounds—ten thousand dollars!" she said excitedly. " But what's the good of it, if he can't lay his hand on it by midnight to-night!"

" He can do so," was Mona's quick reply. " I was going to tell him that, but the lawyer came, and—"

Kitty sprang up and down in excitement. " I had a plan. It might have worked without this. It was the only way then. But this makes it sure—yes, most beautifully sure! It shows that the thing to do is to follow your convictions. You say you actually have the money, Mrs. Crozier?"

Mona took from her pocket an envelope, and out of it she drew four Bank of England notes. " Here it is—here are four one-thousand-pound notes. I had it paid to me that way five years ago, and here—here it is!" she added with almost a touch of hysteria in her voice, for the excitement of it all acted on her like an electric storm.

" Well, we'll get to work at once," declared Kitty, looking at the notes admiringly, then taking them from Mona and smoothing them out with tender firmness. " It's just the luck of the wide world, as my father used to say. It actually is. Now you see," she continued, " it's like this. That letter you wrote him"—she addressed herself to Mona—" it has to be changed. You have got to rewrite it, and you must put into it these four bank-notes. Then when you see him again you must have that letter opened at exactly the right moment, and—oh, I wonder if you will do it exactly right!" she added dubiously to Mona. " You don't play your cards very well, and it's just possible that, even now, with all the cards in your hands, you will throw them away as you did in the past. I wish that—"

Seeing Mona's agitation changing to choler, the Young Doctor intervened quickly. He did not know Kitty was purposely stinging Crozier's unhappy little consort, so that she should be put upon her mettle to do the thing without bungling.

" You can trust Mrs. Crozier to use dis-

"HERE IT IS—HERE ARE FOUR ONE THOUSAND POUND NOTES"

cretion and act carefully; but what exactly do you mean? I judge that Mrs. Crozier does not see more distinctly than I do," he remarked inquiringly to Kitty, and with admonishment in tone and emphasis.

"No, I do not understand quite—will you explain?" interposed Mona with inner resentment at being managed, but feeling that she could not do without Kitty even if she would.

"As I said," continued Kitty, "I will open that letter, and you will put in another letter and these bank-notes; and when he repeats what he said about the way you felt and wrote when he broke his pledge, you can blaze up and tell him to open the letter. Then he will be so sorry that he'll get down on his knees, and you will be happy ever after."

"But it will be a fraud, and dishonest and dishonorable," protested Mona.

Kitty almost sniffed, but she was too agitated to be scornful. "Just leave that to me, please. It won't make me a bit more dishonorable to open the letter again—I've opened it once, and I don't feel any the worse for it. I have no conscience, and things don't weigh on my mind at all. I'm a light-minded person."

Looking closely at her the Young Doctor got a still further insight into the mind and soul of this prairie girl, who used a lid of irony to cover a well of deep feeling. Things did not weigh on her mind! He was sure that pain to the wife of Shiel Crozier would be mortal torture to Kitty Tynan.

"But I felt exactly what I wrote that Derby Day when he broke his pledge, and he ought to know me exactly as I was," urged Mona. "I don't want to deceive him—to appear a bit better than I am."

"Oh, you'd rather lose him!" said Kitty almost savagely. "Knowing how hard it is to keep a man under the best circumstances, you'd willingly make the circumstances as bad as they can be—is that it? Besides, weren't you sorry afterwards that you wrote that letter?"

"Yes, yes, desperately sorry."

"And you wished often that your real self had written on Derby Day and not the scratch-cat you were then?"

Mona flushed, but answered bravely, "Yes, a thousand times."

"What business had you to show him your cat-self, your unreal, not your real self on Derby Day five years ago? Wasn't it your duty to show him your real self?"

Mona nodded helplessly. "Yes, I know it was."

"Then isn't it your duty to see that your real self speaks in that letter now?"

"I want him to know me exactly as I am, and then—"

Kitty made a passionate gesture. Was ever such an uncomprehending woman as this diamond-button of a wife?

"And then you would be unhappy ever after instead of being happy ever after. What is the good of prejudicing your husband against you by telling the unnecessary truth. He is in a desperate mood, and besides, he has been away from you for five years, and we all change somehow—particularly men, when there are so many women in the world, and very pretty women of all ages and kinds and colors and tastes, and dazing and dazzling deceitful hussies too. It isn't wise for any woman to let her husband or any one at all see her exactly as she is; and only the silly ones do it. They tell what they think is the truth about their own wickedness, and it isn't the truth at all, because I suppose women don't know how to tell the exact truth; and they can be just as unfair to themselves as they are to others. Besides, haven't you *any* sense of humor, Mrs. Crozier? It's as good as a play, this. Just think, after five years of desertion, and trouble without end, and it all put right by a little sleight-of-hand. Shall I open it?"

She held the letter up. Mona nodded almost eagerly now, for come of a subtle, social world far away, she still was no match for the subtlety of the wilds—or was it the cunning that the wild things know?

Kitty left the room, but in a moment afterward returned with a letter open. "The kettle on the hob is the friend of the family," she said gaily. "Here it is all ready for what there is to do. You go and keep watch for Mr. Crozier," she added to the Young Doctor. "He won't be gone long, I should think, and we don't want him bursting in on us before I've got that letter safe back into his desk. If he comes, you keep him busy for a moment. When we're quite ready I'll come to the front door, and then you will know it is all right."

"I'm to go while you make up your prescription—all right!" said the Young Doctor, and with a wave of the hand he left the room.

Instantly Kitty brought a lead pencil and paper. "Now sit down and write to him, Mrs. Crozier," she said briskly. "And use discretion; don't gush; slap his face a little for breaking his pledge, and afterwards tell him that you did at the Derby what you had abused him for doing. Then tell him about this four thousand pounds—twenty thousand dollars—my, what a lot of money, and all got in one day! Tell him that it was all won by his own cash. It's as easy as can be, and it will be a certainty now."

So saying she lit a match. "You hold this wicked old cat-fish letter into the flame, please, Mrs. Crozier, and keep praying all the time, and please remember that 'our little hands were never made to tear each other's eyes.'"

Mona's small fingers were trembling as she held the fateful letter into the flame, and then in silence both watched it burn to a cinder. A faint, hopeful smile was on Mona's face now.

"What isn't never was to those that never knew," said Kitty briskly, and pushed a chair up to the table. "Now sit down and write, please."

Mona sat down. Taking up a sheet of note-paper she looked at it dubiously.

"Oh, what a fool I am!" said Kitty, understanding the look. "And that's what every criminal does—he forgets something. I forgot the note-paper. Of course you can't use that note-paper. Of course not. He'd know it in a minute. Besides, the sheet we burned had an engraved address on it. I never thought of that — good gracious!"

"Wait — wait," said Mona, her face lighting. "I may have some sheets in my writing-case. It's only a chance, but I had some when I left home. I'll go and see."

While she was gone to her bedroom Kitty stood still in the middle of the room lost in reflection, as completely absorbed as though she was seeing things thousands of miles away. In truth, she was seeing things millions of miles away; she was seeing a Promised Land. It was a gift of hers, or a penalty of her life, perhaps, that she could lose herself in reverie at a moment's notice—a reverie as complete as though she was subtracted from life's realities. Now, as she looked out of the door, far over the prairie to a tiny group of pine-trees in the vanishing distance, lines she once read floated through her mind:

"Away and beyond the point of pines,
  In a pleasant land where the glad grapes be,
Purple and pendent on verdant vines,
  I know that my fate is awaiting me."

What fate was to be hers? There was no joy in her eyes as she gazed. Mrs. Crozier was beside the table again before she roused herself from her trance.

"I've got it—just two sheets, two solitary sheets," said Mona in triumph. "How long they have been in my case I don't know. It is almost uncanny that it should be there just when it was most needed."

"Providential, we should say out here," was Kitty's response. "Begin, please. Be sure you have the right date. It was—"

Mona had already written the date, and she interrupted Kitty with the words, "As though I could forget it!" All at once Kitty put a restraining hand on her arm.

"Wait—wait, you mustn't write on that paper yet. Suppose you didn't say the real wise thing—and only two sheets of paper and so much to say!"

"How right you always are!" said Mona, and took up one of the blank sheets which Kitty had just brought her.

Then she began to write. For a minute she wrote swiftly, nervously, and had nearly finished a page when Kitty said to her, "I think I had better see what you have written. I don't think you are the best judge. You see, I have known him better than you for the last five years, and I *am* the best judge—please, I mean it in the rightest, kindest way," she added, as she saw Mona shrink. It was like hurting a child, and she loved children—so much. She had always a vision of children at her knee.

Silently Mrs. Crozier pushed the sheet towards her. Kitty read the page with a strange, eager look in her eyes. "Yes, that's right as far as it goes," she said. "It doesn't gush. It's natural. It's you as you are now, not as you were then, of course."

Again Mona bent over the paper and wrote till she had completed a page. Then Kitty looked over her shoulder and read what had been written. "No, no, no, that won't do," she exclaimed. "That won't do at all. It isn't in the way that will do what we want done. You've gone quite, quite wrong. I'll do it. I'll dictate it to you. I know exactly what to say, and we mustn't make any mistake. Write, please —you must!"

Mona scratched out what had been written without a word. "I am waiting," she said submissively.

"All right. Now we go on. Write. I'll dictate."

"'And look here, dearest,'" she began, but Mona stopped her.

"We do not say 'look here' in England. I would have said 'and see.'"

"And see — dearest," corrected Kitty, with an accent on the last word, "while I was mad at you for the moment for breaking your promise—"

"In England we don't say 'mad' in that connection," Mona again interrupted. "We say 'angry' or 'annoyed' or 'vexed.'" There was real distress in her tone.

"Now I'll tell you what to do," said Kitty cheerfully, "I'll speak it, and you write it my way of thinking, and then when we've finished you will take out of the letter any words that are not pure, lovely, noble, classic English. I know what you mean, and you are quite right. Mr. Crozier never says 'look here' or 'mad,' and he speaks better than any one I ever heard. Now, we certainly must get on."

After an instant she began again.

"—While I was angry at you a moment for breaking your promise, I cannot reproach you for it, because I, too, bet on the Derby, but I bet on a horse that you had said as much against as you could. I did it because you had had very bad luck all this year and lost, and also the year before, and I thought—"

For several minutes, with greater deliberation than was usual with her, Kitty dictated, and at the end of the letter she said, " I am, dearest, your—"

Here Mona sharply interrupted her. " If you don't mind I will say that myself in my own way," she said flushing.

" Oh, I forgot for the moment that I was speaking for you!" responded Kitty, with a strange, lurking, undermeaning in her voice. " I threw myself into it so. Do you think I've done the thing right?" she added.

With a direct, honest friendliness Mona looked into Kitty's eyes. " You have said the exact right thing as to meaning, I am sure, and I can change an occasional word here and there to make it all conventional English."

Kitty nodded. " Don't lose a minute in copying it. We must get the letter back in his desk as soon as possible."

As Mona wrote Kitty sat with the envelope in her hand, alternately looking at it and into the distance beyond the point of pines. She was certain that she had found the solution of the troubles of Shiel and Mona Crozier, for Crozier would now have his fortune, and the return to his wife was a matter of course. Was she altogether sure? But yes, she was altogether sure. She remembered, with a sudden, swift plunge of blood in her veins, that early dawn when she bent over him as he lay beneath the tree, and as she kissed him in his sleep he had murmured, " My darling!" That had not been for her, though it had been her kiss which had stirred his dreaming soul to say the words. If they had only been meant for her, then —oh, then life would be so much easier in the future! If—if she could only kiss him again and he would wake and say—

KITTY THRUST THE LETTER INTO ITS PIGEON-HOLE IN THE DESK AND IN A MOMENT WAS BACK AGAIN

She got to her feet with an involuntary exclamation. For an instant she had been lost in a world of her own—a world of the impossible.

" I almost thought I heard a step in the other room," she said in explanation to Mona. Going to the door of Crozier's room she appeared to listen for a moment, and then she opened it.

"No, it is all right," she said.

In another few minutes Mona had finished the letter. "Do you wish to read it again?" she asked Kitty, but not handing it to her.

"No, I leave the words to you. It was the right meaning I wanted in it," she replied.

Suddenly Mona came to her and laid a hand on her arm.

"You are wonderful—a wonderful, wise, beloved girl," she said, and there were tears in her eyes.

Kitty gave the tiny fingers a spasmodic clasp, and said: "Quick, we must get them in!" She put the bank-notes inside the sheets of paper, then hastily placed both in the envelope and sealed the envelope again.

"It's just a tiny bit damp with the steam yet, but it will be all right in five minutes. How soiled the envelope is!" Kitty added. "Five years in and out of the desk, in and out of his pocket—but all so nice and unsoiled and sweet and bonny inside," she added. "To say nothing of the bawbees, as Mr. Crozier calls money. Well, we are ready. It all depends on you now, Mrs. Crozier."

"No, not all."

"He used to be afraid of you; now you are afraid of him," said Kitty, as though stating a commonplace.

There was no more shrewishness left in the little woman to meet this chastisement. The forces against her were too many. Loneliness and the long struggle to face the world without her man; the determination of this masterful young woman who had been so long a part of her husband's life; and, more than all, a new feeling altogether—love, and the dependence a woman feels, the longing to find rest in strong arms, which comes with the first revelation of love, had conquered what Kitty had called her "bossiness." She was now tremulous before the crisis which she must presently face. Pride in her fortune, in her independence, had died down in her. She no longer thought of herself as a woman especially endowed and privileged. She took her fortune now like a man; for she had been taught that a man could set her aside just because she had money, could desert her to be independent of it. It had been a revelation to her, and she was chastened of all the termagancy visible and invisible in her. She stood now before Kitty of "a humble and a contrite heart," and made no reply at all to the implied challenge. Kitty, instantly sorry for what she had said, let it go at that. She was only now aware of how deeply her arrows had gone home.

As they stood silent there was a click at the gate. Kitty ran into Crozier's room, thrust the letter into its pigeonhole in the desk, and in a moment was back again. In the garden the Young Doctor was holding Crozier in conversation, but watching the front door. So soon, however, as Kitty had shown herself, as she had promised, at the front door and then disappeared, he turned Crozier towards the house again by an adroit word, and left him at the doorstep.

Seeing who was inside the room Crozier hesitated, and his long face, with paleness added to its asceticism, took on a look which could have given no hope of happiness to Mona. It went to her heart as no look of his had ever gone. Suddenly she had a revelation of how little she had known of what he was, or what any man was or could be, or of those springs of nature lying far below the outer lives which move in orbits of sheltering convention. It is because some men and women are so sheltered from the storms of life by wealth and comfort that these piercing agonies which strike down to the uttermost depths so seldom reach them.

Shiel half turned away, not sullen, not morose, but with a strange apathy settled on him. He had once heard a man say, "I feel as though I wanted to crawl into a hole and die." That was the way he felt now, for to be beaten in the game which you have played like a man yourself and have been fouled into an unchallenged defeat, without the voice of the umpire, is a fate which has smothered the soul of better men than Crozier.

Mona's voice stopped him. "Do not go, Shiel," she urged gently. "No, you must not go. I want justice from you, if nothing else. You must play the game with me. I want justice. I have to say some things I had no chance to say before, and I want to hear some things I have a right to hear. Indeed, you must play the game."

He drew himself up. Not to be a sportsman, not to play the game—to accuse him of this would have brought him back from the edge of the grave in protest.

"I'm not fit to-day. Let it be to-morrow, Mona," was his hesitating reply; but he did not leave the doorway.

She shook her head and made a swift little childlike gesture towards him. "We are sure of to-day; we are not sure of to-morrow. One or the other of us might not be here to-morrow. Let us do to-day the thing that belongs to to-day."

That note struck home, for indeed the black spirit which whispers to men in their most despairing hours to end it all had whispered to him.

"Let us do to-day the thing that belongs to to-day," she had just said, and, strange to say, there shot into his mind words that belonged to the days when he went to church at Castlegarry and thought of a thousand things other than prayer or praise, but yet heard with the acute ears of the young, and remembered with the persistent memory of youth. *"For the night cometh when no man can work,"* were the words which came to him. He shuddered slightly. Suppose that this indeed was the beginning of the night! As she said, he must play the game—play it as Crozier of Lammis would have played it.

He stepped inside the room. "Let it be to-day," he said.

"We may be interrupted in this room," she replied. Courage came to her. "Let us talk in your room," she added, and going over she opened the door of it and walked in. The matured modesty of a lost five years was not about her now. She was a woman fighting for her happiness, and she had been so beaten by the rods of scorn, so smothered by the dust of humiliation, that she had now the courage of those who can bear no more and would rather die fighting than in the lethargy of despair.

It was like her old self to take the initiative, but she did it now in so different a way—without masterfulness or assumption. It was rather like saying, "I will do what I know you wish me to do; I will lay all reserve aside for your sake; I will be bold because I love you."

He shut the door behind them and motioned her to a chair.

"No, I will not sit," she said. "That is too formal. You ask any stranger to sit. I am at home here, Shiel, and I will stand."

"What was it you wanted to say, Mona?" he asked, scarcely looking at her.

"I should like to think that there was something you wished to hear," she replied. "Don't you want to know all that has happened since you left us—about me, about your brother, about your friends, about Lammis? I bought Lammis at the sale you ordered: it is still *ours*." She gave emphasis to "ours." "You may not want to hear all that has happened to me since you left, still I must tell you some things that you ought to know, if we are going to part again. You treated me badly. There was no reason why you should have left and placed me in the position you did."

His head came up sharply and his voice became a little hard. "I told you I was penniless, and I would not live on you, and I could do nothing in England—I had no trade or profession. If I had said good-by to you, you would probably have offered me a ticket to Canada. As I was a pauper I preferred to go with what I had out of the wreck—just enough to bring me here. But I've earned my own living since."

"Penniless—just enough to bring you out here!" Her voice had a sound of honest amazement. "How can you say such a thing! You had my letter—you said you had my letter!"

"Yes, I had your letter," he answered. "Your kind young brother brought it to me! You had told him all the dear womanly things you had said or were going to say to your husband, and he passed them on to me with the letter."

"Never mind what he said to you, Shiel. It was what I said that mattered." She was getting bolder every minute. The comedy was playing into her hands.

"You said the same things in the letter you wrote me," he replied.

Her protest sounded indignantly real. "I said nothing in the letter I wrote you that any man would not wish to hear. Is it so unpleasant for a man who thinks he is penniless to be told that he has made the year's income of—of a cabinet minister?"

"I don't understand," he returned helplessly.

"You talk as though you had never read my letter."

"I never have read your letter," he replied in bewilderment.

"Then what did you do with it? Gave it to some one else to read—to some other woman, perhaps."

He was really shocked and greatly pained. "Hush! You shall not say that kind of thing, Mona. I've never had anything to do with any woman but my wife since I married her."

THE BANK-NOTES FELL TO THE FLOOR AS HE TOOK OUT THE SHEET INSIDE

"Then what did you do with the letter?"

"It's there," he said, pointing to the high desk with the green-baize top.

"And you say you have never read it?"

"Never."

She raised her head with dainty haughtiness. "Then if you have still the same sense of honor that made you keep faith with the bookmakers — you didn't run away from them!—read it now, here in my presence. Read it, Shiel. I demand that you read it now. It is my right. You are in honor bound—"

It was the only way. She dare not give

Her face had the flush of honest anger. "You do not dare to tell me you destroyed my letter without reading it — that you destroyed all that letter contained simply because you no longer cared for your wife; because you wanted to be rid of her, wanted to vanish and never see her any more, and so go and leave no trace of yourself. You have the courage here to my face"—the comedy of the situation gained much from her mock indignation—she no longer had any compunctions—"to say that you destroyed my letter and what it contained —a small fortune it would be out here!"

"I did not destroy your letter, Mona," was the embarrassed response.

him time to question, to suspect; she must sweep him along to conviction. She was by no means sure that there wasn't a flaw in the scheme somewhere—something that would betray her, and she could hardly wait till it was over, till he had read the letter.

In a moment he was again near her with the letter in his hand.

"Yes, that's it—that's the letter," she said with wondering and reproachful eyes. "I remember the little scratchy blot from the pen on the envelope. There it is just as I made it five years ago. But how disgracefully soiled the envelope is! I suppose it has been tossed about in your saddlebag, or with your old clothes, and only kept to remind you day by day that you had a wife you couldn't live with—kept as a warning never to think of her except to say, 'I hate you, Mona, because you are rich and heartless and not bigger than a pinch of snuff.' That was the kind way you used to speak of her even when you were first married to her—contemptuously, contemptuously always in your heart, no matter what you said out loud. And the end showed it—the end showed it: you deserted her!"

He was so fascinated by the picture she made of passion and incensed declamation that he did not attempt to open the letter, and he wondered why there was such a difference between the effect of her temper on him now and the effect of it those long years ago. He had no feeling of uneasiness in her presence now, no sense of irritation. In spite of her tirade, he had a feeling that it didn't matter, that she must bluster in her tiny teacup if she wanted to do so.

"Open the letter at once," she insisted. "If you don't, I will." She made as though to take the letter from him, but with a sudden twist he tore open the envelope. The bank-notes fell to the floor as he took out the sheet inside. Wondering, he stooped to pick them up.

"Four thousand pounds!" he exclaimed, examining them. "What does it mean?"

"Read," she commanded.

He devoured the letter. His eyes swam; then there rushed into them the flame which always made them illumine his medieval face like the light from "the burning bush." He did not question or doubt, because he saw what he wished to see, which is the way of man. It all looked perfectly natural and convincing to him.

"Mona—Mona—heaven above and all the gods of hell and Hellas, what a fool, what a fool I've been!" he exclaimed. "Mona—Mona, tell me, can you forgive me? I didn't read this letter because I thought it was going to slash me on the raw—on the raw flesh of my own lacerating. I simply couldn't bear to read what your brother said was in the letter. Yet I couldn't destroy it, either. It was you. I had to keep it. Mona, tell me, is it too late?"

He held out his arms with a passionate exclamation.

"I asked you to kiss me yesterday and you wouldn't," she protested. "I tried to make you love me yesterday, and you wouldn't. When a woman gets a rebuff like that, when—"

She could not bear it any longer. With a cry of joy she was in his arms.

After a moment he said. "The best of all was, that you—you vixen, you bet on that Derby and won, and—"

"With your money, remember, Shiel."

"With my money!" he cried exultingly. "Yes, that's the best of it—the next best of it. It was your betting that was the best of all—the best thing you ever did since we married—that is, except your coming here!"

"It's in time to help you, too—with your own money, isn't it?"

He glanced at his watch. "Hours—I'm hours to the good! That crowd — that gang of thieves—that bunch of highwaymen! I've got them—got them, and got a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, too, to start again at home—at Lammis, Mona, back on the—but no, I'm not sure that I can live there now after this big life out here."

"I'm not so sure, either," Mona replied, with a light of larger understanding in her eyes. "But we'll have to go back and stop the world talking, and put things in shape before we come here to stay."

"To stay here—do you mean that?" he asked eagerly.

"Somewhere in this big land," she replied softly; "anyhow, to stay here till

I've grown up a little. I wasn't only small in body in the old days, I was small in mind, Shiel."

"Anyhow, I've done with betting and racing, Mona. I've just got time left—I'm only thirty-nine—to start and really do something with myself."

"Well, start now, dear man. What is it you have to do before twelve o'clock to-night?"

"What is it? Why, I have to pay over two thousand of these"—he flourished the bank-notes—"and even then I'll still have two thousand left. But wait—wait. There was the original fifty pounds. Where is that fifty pounds, little girl alive? Out with it. This is the profit. Where is the fifty you bet with?" His voice was gay with raillery.

She could look him in the face now and prevaricate without any shame or compunction at all. "That fifty pounds—that! Why, I used it to buy my ticket for Canada. My husband ought to pay my expenses out to him."

He laughed greatly. All Ireland was rioting in his veins now. He had no logic or reasoning left. "Well, that's the way to get into your old man's heart, Mona. To think of that! I call it tact divine. Everything has spun my way at last. I *was* right about that Derby, after all. It was in my bones that I'd make a pot out of it, but I thought I had lost it all when Flamingo went down."

"You never know your luck—you used to say that, Shiel."

"I say it again. Come, we must tell our friends—Kitty, her mother, and the Young Doctor. You don't know what good friends they have been to me, mavourneen."

"And to me also!" said Mona, opening the door to the outer room.

Then Crozier called with a great, cheery voice—what Mona used to call his tally-ho voice. Mrs. Tynan appeared smiling greatly. She knew at a glance what had happened. It was so interesting, that she could even forgive Mona.

"Where's Kitty?" asked Crozier almost boisterously.

"She has gone for a ride with John Sibley," answered Mrs. Tynan.

"Look, there she is!" said Mona, laying a hand on Crozier's arm, and pointing with the other out over the prairie.

Crozier looked out toward the north-western horizon, and in the distance was a woman riding as hard as her horse could go, with a man galloping hard after her. It seemed as though they were riding into the sunset.

"She's riding the horse you won that race with years ago when you first came here, Mr. Crozier," said Mrs. Tynan. "John Sibley bought it from Mr. Brennan."

Mona did not see the look which came into Crozier's face as, with one hand shading his eyes and the other grasping the bank-notes which were to start him in life again, independent and self-respecting, he watched the girl riding on and on ever ahead of the man.

It was at that moment the Young Doctor entered the room, and he distracted Mona's attention for a moment. Going forward to him Mona shook him warmly by the hand. Then she went up to Mrs. Tynan and kissed her.

"I would like to kiss your daughter, too, Mrs. Tynan," Mona said. "What are you looking at so hard, Shiel?" she presently added to her husband.

He did not turn to her. His eyes were still shaded by his hand.

"That horse still goes well," he said in a low voice. "As good as ever—as good as ever."

"He loves horses so," remarked Mona, as though she could tell Mrs. Tynan and the Young Doctor anything about Shiel Crozier that they did not know!

"Kitty rides well, doesn't she?" asked Mrs. Tynan of Crozier.

"What a pair—girl and horse!" Crozier exclaimed. "Thoroughbred — absolutely thoroughbred!"

Kitty had ridden away with her secret, her very own, as she thought: but Shiel Crozier knew — the man that mattered knew.

EPILOGUE

Golden, all golden, save where there was a fringe of trees at a watercourse; save where a garden, like a spot of emerald, made a button on the royal garment wrapped across the breast of the prairie. Above, making for the trees of the foothills far away, a golden eagle floated, a prairie-hen sped affrighted from some invisible thing; and in the far distance a railway train slipped down the plain like a serpent making for a covert in the first hills of the first world that ever was.

At first glance the vast plain seemed uninhabited, yet here and there were men and horses tiny in the vastness, but conquering. Here and there also—for it was July — a haymaker sharpened his scythe and the sound came singing through the air, as radiant as it was stirring with life.

Seated in the shade of a clump of trees a girl sat with her chin in her hands looking out over the prairie, an intense dreaming in her eyes. Her horse was tethered near by, but it scarcely made a sound. It was a horse which had once won a great race, with an Irish gentleman on his back. Long time the girl sat absorbed, her golden color, her brown-gold hair in harmony with the universal stencil of gold. With her eyes drowned in the distance, she presently murmured something to herself, and as she did so the eyes deepened from a gold-brown to a nameless umber tone, deeper than gold, warmer than brown — such a color as only can be found in a jewel or in a leaf that the frost has touched.

The frost had touched the soul which gave the color to the eyes of the girl. Yet she seemed all summer, all glow, and youth and gladness. Her voice was golden, too, and the words which fell from her lips were as though tuned to the sound of falling water. The tone of the voice would last when the gold of all else became faded or tarnished. It had its origin in the soul:—

"Whereaway goes my lad? Tell me, has he gone alone!
Never harsh word did I speak; never hurt I gave;
Strong he was and beautiful; like a heron he has flown—
Hereaway, hereaway will I make my grave."

The voice lingered on the words till it trailed away into nothing, like the vanishing note of a violin which seems still to pulse faintly after the sound has ceased.

"But he did not go alone, and I have not made my grave," the girl said, and raised her head at the sound of approaching footsteps. With an effort she emerged from the half-trance in which she had been, and smiled at the man approaching.

"Dear bully, bulbous being—how that word 'bully' would have made *her* cringe!" she said as the man ambled towards her. He could not go as fast as his mind urged him.

"I've got news—news, news!" he said as he waded through his own perspiration toward her.

"I can guess what it is," the girl remarked smilingly, as she reached out a hand to him, but remained seated. "It's a real, live baby born to Lydia, wife of Methuselah, the woman also being of goodly years. It is, isn't it?"

"The fattest, finest, most 'scrumpshus' son of all the ages, that ever—"

Kitty laughed happily and very whimsically. "Like none since Moses was found among the bulrushes! Where was this one found, and what do you intend to call him—Jesse, after his 'pa'?" The old mockery was in the fluted voice.

"No—nothing so common. He's to be called Shiel—Shiel Crozier Bulrush, that's to be his name."

The face of the girl became a shade pensive now. "Oh! And do you think you can guarantee that he will be worth the name? Do you never think what his father is?"

"I'm starting him right with that name. I can do that, anyway," laughed the imperturbable one.

"And Mrs. Bulrush, after her great effort—how is she?"

"Flying — simply flying! Earth not good enough for her. Simply flying. But here—here is more news. Guess what it is—it's for you. I've just come from the post-office, and they said there was an English letter for you, so I brought it."

He handed it over. She laid it in her lap and waited as though for him to go.

"Can't I hear how he is? He's the best man that ever crossed my path," he said.

"It happens to be in his wife's, not his, handwriting—did ever such a scrap of a woman write so sprawling a hand!" she replied, holding the letter up.

"But she'll let us know in the letter how *he* is, won't she?"

Kitty had now recovered herself, and slowly she opened the envelope and took out the letter. As she did so something fluttered to the ground.

Jesse Bulrush picked it up. “That looks nice,” he said, and he whistled in surprise. “It's a money-draft on a bank.”

Kitty, whose eyes were fixed on the big, important handwriting, answered calmly and without apparently looking, as she took the paper from his hand: “Yes, it's a wedding present—five hundred dollars—to buy what I like best for my home. So she says.”

“Mrs. Crozier, of course.”

“Of course.”

“Well, that's magnificent. What will you do with it?”

Kitty rose and held out her hand. “Go back to your flying partner, happy man, and ask her what she would do with five hundred dollars if she had it.”

“She'd buy her lord and master a present with it, of course,” he answered.

“Good-by, Mr. Roly-poly,” she responded, laughing. “You always could think of things for other people to do; and have never done anything yourself until now. Good-by, *father!*”

Her laughter rang after him provokingly.

When he was gone and out of sight her face changed, and with sudden anger she crushed and crumpled up the draft for five hundred in her hand. “‘A token of affection from both’!” she exclaimed, quoting the letter. “One lone leaf of Irish shamrock from him would—”

She stopped. “But he will send a message of his own,” she continued. “He will—he will. Even if he doesn't, I'll know that he remembers just the same. He does—he does remember.”

She drew herself up with an effort, and, as it were, shook herself free from the memories which dimmed her eyes.

Not far away a man was riding toward the clump of trees where she was. She saw, and hastened to her horse.

“If I told John all I feel he'd understand. I believe he always has understood,” she added with a far-off look.

The draft was still crushed in her hand when she mounted the beloved horse, whose name now was Shiel.

Presently she smoothed out the crumpled paper. “Yes, I'll take it; I'll put it by,” she murmured. “John will keep on betting. He'll be broke some day and will need it, maybe.”

A moment later she was riding hard to meet the man who, before the corn harvest came, would call her wife.

THE END

NEXT MONTH'S NOVEL

Next month—May—we shall give you another fine novel, a complete long book, entitled:

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BY P. G. WODEHOUSE

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LIGHT VERSE

AT THE OPERA

PERCHED in topmost gallery,
  Downward fondly gazing,
I behold Penelope—
  Maid of charms amazing.
E'en should she espy me there,
  Scarcely could she know me;
In the glittering parterre
  She's too far below me!

Vainly for thy help I've cried,
  Mighty goddess Venus;
Yawns a cruel gulf and wide
  Evermore between us.
Yes, my hapless fate is sure—
  Never can she love me;
She's an heiress, I am poor—
  She's too far above me!

Douglas Hemingway

A LATE DISCOVERY

CLASPED in a close embrace were they
  Heedless alike, of time and space,
Knowing of naught that could betray
  To prying eyes their hiding place.

They cared not that the hour was late,
  And in the sky the moon hung low,
Each in the other found a mate,
  (And can this life more bliss bestow?)

But I discovered their retreat,
  And madly wrested them apart;
Then, only, was my joy complete,
  And exultation filled my heart.

For I had toiled with weary sighs,
  And torn my evening gown, alack—
In search of those wee hooks and eyes,
  Just in the middle of the back!

Grace E. Mott

THE DÉBUTANTE

OH, beat your drums and ring your brass,
  You wonder-world of sham,
I've found out in my looking-glass,
  How beautiful I am!
So what's the use of deeper things—
  Of thinking wrong or right—
For I have found a songbird's wings,
  And know a songbird's flight!

Go nature! Blow your breezes high
  And fan my cheeks to rose,
And light the sparkle in my eye
  To please a hundred beaux;
For I have beaux to trample down
  And beaux to love and hate—
I've courtiers all about the town
  From which to choose my mate!

So sing me in and sing me out,
  The earth's a lovely place,
And all the loveliness about
  Is mirrored in my face.
Oh, beat your drums and ring your brass,
  You wonder-world of sham,
I've found out in my looking-glass
  How beautiful I am!

Jane Burr

PISCATORIAL PHILOSOPHY

I MARVELED that he would sit in his boat,
  From sunrise till oncreep of night,
And seem quite as happy to fish with no luck
  As he was when he did get a bite!

I asked him to tell me the why of it all,
  (And now for his humor I'm wishing!)
He said: "While it's fun to catch a big fish,
  The best fun of all is—just fishing!"

Amanda B. Hall

A TRUE POET

ABOU BEN POET, (May his tribe increase,)
  Awoke from pipe dreams of the Isles of Greece
And saw, within his attic, cold and bare
A Vision, sitting in a broken chair.
"Hail!" Abou chanted; "hast thou come this way
To offer me a classic wreath of bay?
Have I at last won glory and renown?
Have I by toil achieved the Poet's Crown?"
"Nay," said the Vision, "I'm the Voice of Fame;
I look for Poets worthy of the name."
"That's me!" cried Abou. "No; I grieve to state,"
The Vision said, "you are not really great."
"All right," he answered, "we will leave it so.
But let me tell you this before you go
Though I am not a Bard or anything,
I've never written Poems To The Spring!"
The Vision looked at him with startled eyes,
And gave a gesture of intense surprise.
And when that list was published in the fall,
Abou Ben Poet's name o'ertopped them all!

Carolyn Wells

"I'VE PLAYED SQUARE WITH YOU FOR FIVE YEARS, AND TREATED YOU AS I'VE TREATED NO OTHER WOMAN IN THE WORLD"

Drawn by C. D. Williams

[See short story, "Bob Corrigan's Fight with a Memory"]

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

Vol. LI May, 1914 Number IV

ALASKA:

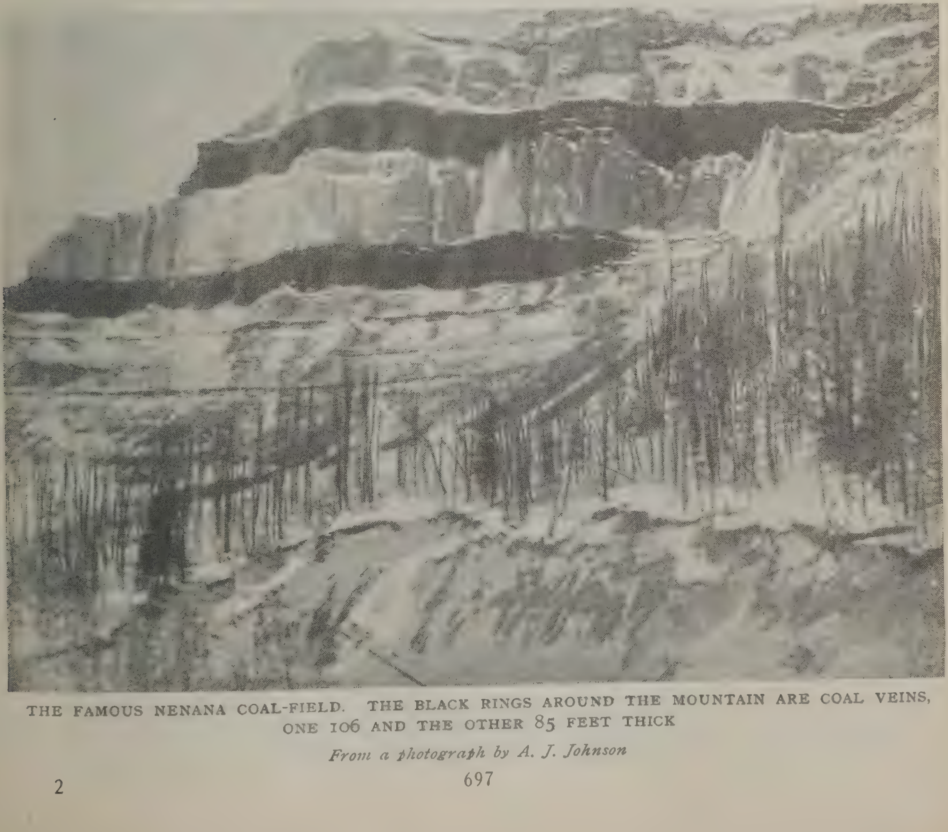
LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

BY JUDSON C. WELLIVER

IN 1867 the United States paid Russia $7,200,000 for Alaska, and almost everybody agreed that it was one of the worst real estate transactions ever consummated. We had been hopelessly defrauded.

Yet since that time $525,000,000 worth of products have been taken out of Alaska, and just the other day the government decided to spend $35,000,000 making the beginnings of a system of government railroads for Alaska.

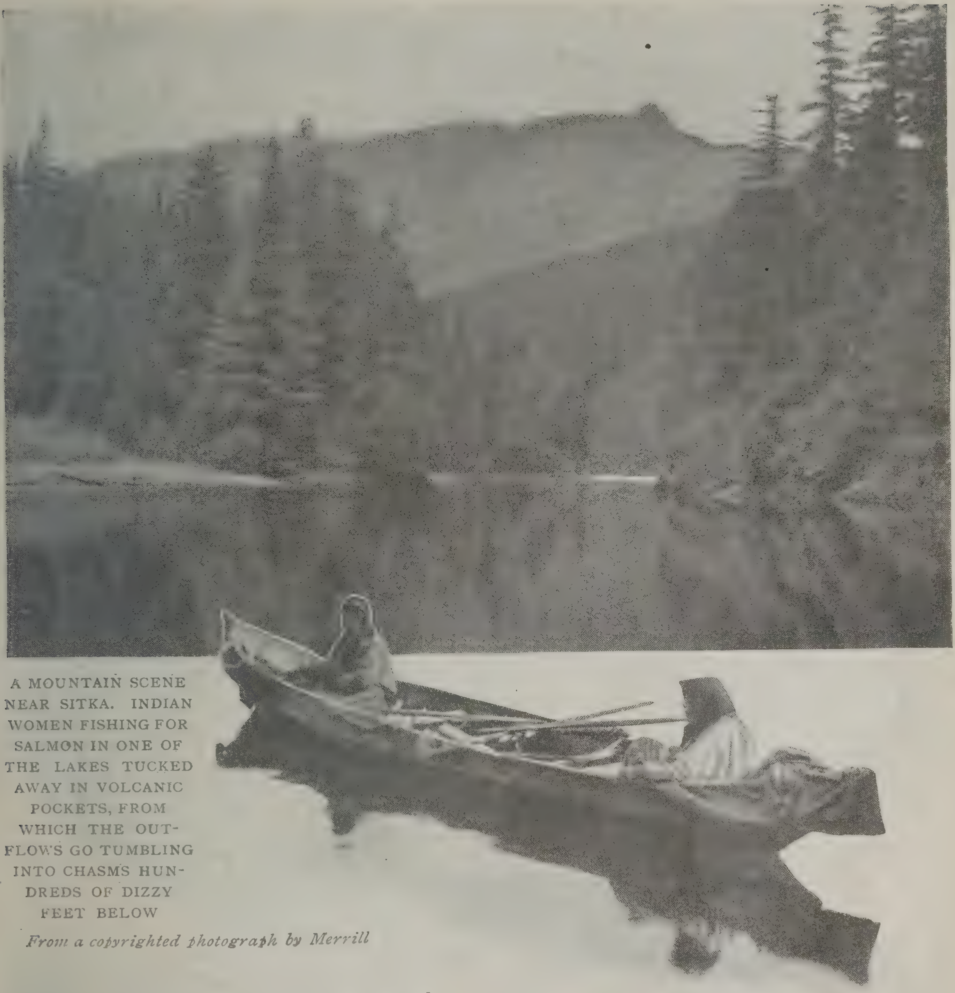
You can't tell about these imperial speculations in real estate measured by continents or the big fractions of continents. Away back in 1803 when Jefferson



THE FAMOUS NENANA COAL-FIELD. THE BLACK RINGS AROUND THE MOUNTAIN ARE COAL VEINS, ONE 106 AND THE OTHER 85 FEET THICK

From a photograph by A. J. Johnson

IDITAROD, ON THE IDITAROD RIVER, AN INTERIOR TOWN WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE THE TERMINUS OF ONE OF THE LINES OF RAILROAD THE GOVERNMENT IS TO BUILD



A MOUNTAIN SCENE NEAR SITKA. INDIAN WOMEN FISHING FOR SALMON IN ONE OF THE LAKES TUCKED AWAY IN VOLCANIC POCKETS, FROM WHICH THE OUTFLOWS GO TUMBLING INTO CHASMS HUNDREDS OF DIZZY FEET BELOW

From a copyrighted photograph by Merrill

was buying Louisiana, and the safe, sober, conservative judgment of the country wanted to impeach him for the wicked recklessness of it—for did he not pay the scandalous figure of $15,000,000 to Napoleon for that worthless wilderness?—it was widely agreed that if we ever got out of the transaction with a whole skin, it would be because there was a mountain of salt on the upper waters of the Missouri, that might some day be worth the money! Aside from that, we were getting nothing but trouble and wild Indians for our investment!

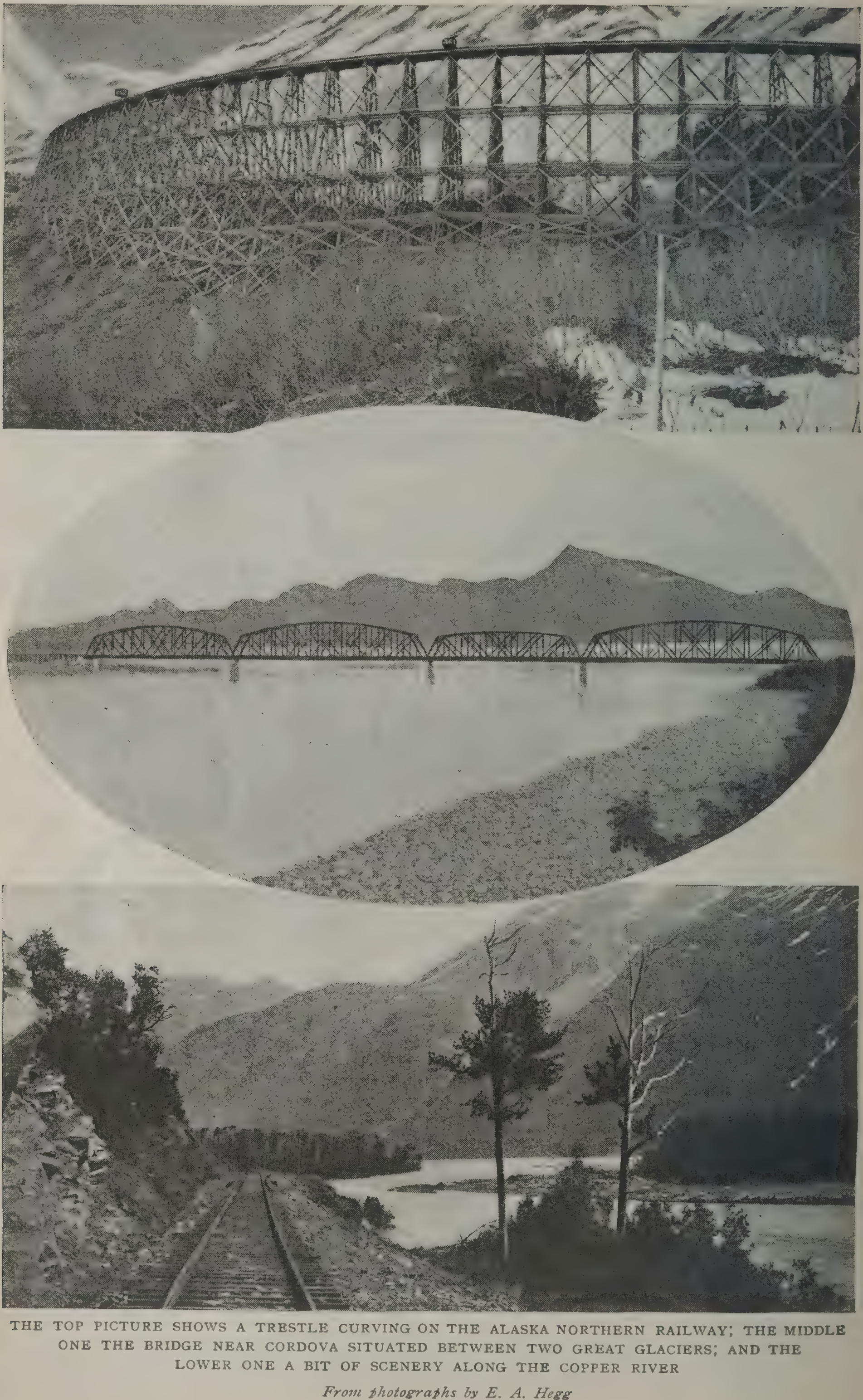
We smile at this estimate of the Mississippi-Missouri Mesopotamian valley from which the magnificent agricultural interior of the nation has been carved. But why smile?

Half a century later the Oregon question was urgent: the question of whether we could get, or wanted, the great Northwest. Senator Dickerson of New Jersey solemnly pronounced judgment that:

> Oregon can never be one of the United States. If we extend our laws to it we must consider it as a colony. . . . The Union is already too extensive and we must make two or three new States from the Territories already formed.

It would seem that that ought to have settled the question. But to the great Daniel Webster, also speaking in the Senate, was reserved the distinction of a more telling presentation, thus:

> What do we want with the vast, worthless area, this region of savages and whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use



THE TOP PICTURE SHOWS A TRESTLE CURVING ON THE ALASKA NORTHERN RAILWAY; THE MIDDLE ONE THE BRIDGE NEAR CORDOVA SITUATED BETWEEN TWO GREAT GLACIERS; AND THE LOWER ONE A BIT OF SCENERY ALONG THE COPPER RIVER

From photographs by E. A. Hegg

STARTING EARLY VEGETABLES IN A HOTHOUSE AT FAIRBANKS. THE PUMPKIN, SQUASH, ETC., IN THE PICTURE ARE NOT OF HOTHOUSE GROWTH BUT ARE FROM A GARDEN NEAR BY

From a photograph by F. H. Nowell

NATIVE WEAVERS AT WORK ON THEIR WONDERFUL BASKETS WHICH ARE PERFECTLY WATER-TIGHT

From a copyrighted photograph by Case & Draper could we ever hope to put these great deserts, or these endless mountain ranges, impenetrable, and covered to their base with eternal snow? What can we ever hope to do with the western coast, of 3,000 miles rock-bound, cheerless, and uninviting, and not a harbor on it? Mr. President, I will never vote one cent from the public treasury to place the Pacific coast one inch nearer to Boston than it now is.

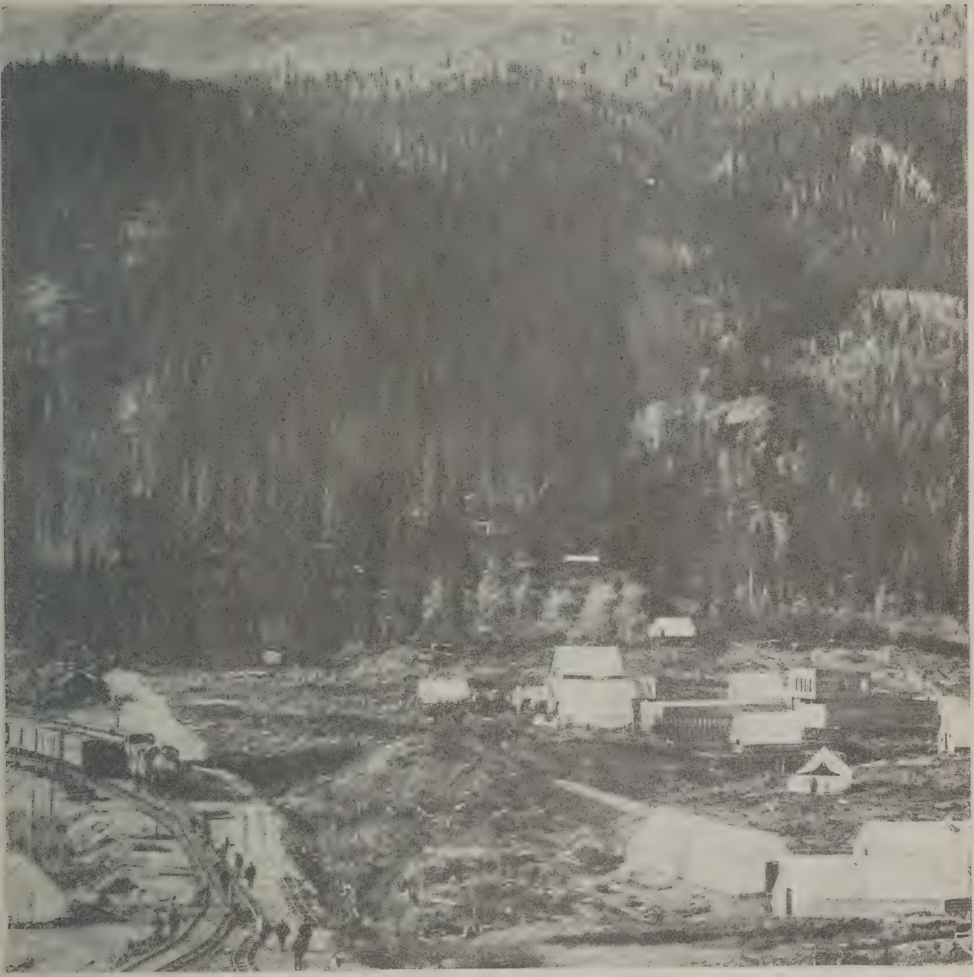
Daniel's views might be set down as merely representative of the attitude of a

THE ESKIMO BEAUTY OF THE TERRITORY

From a copyrighted photograph by B. B. Dobbs

ALLEN AND DARLING'S RACING DOG-TEAM WHICH WON A TEN-THOUSAND-DOLLAR ALL-ALASKA SWEEPSTAKES FOR DOG-TEAMS AT NOME IN 1910

From a photograph by B. B. Dobbs



THE TOWN OF CHITINA, 132 MILES INLAND. WAGON ROADS TO THE INTERIOR CONNECT WITH THE RAILWAY HERE

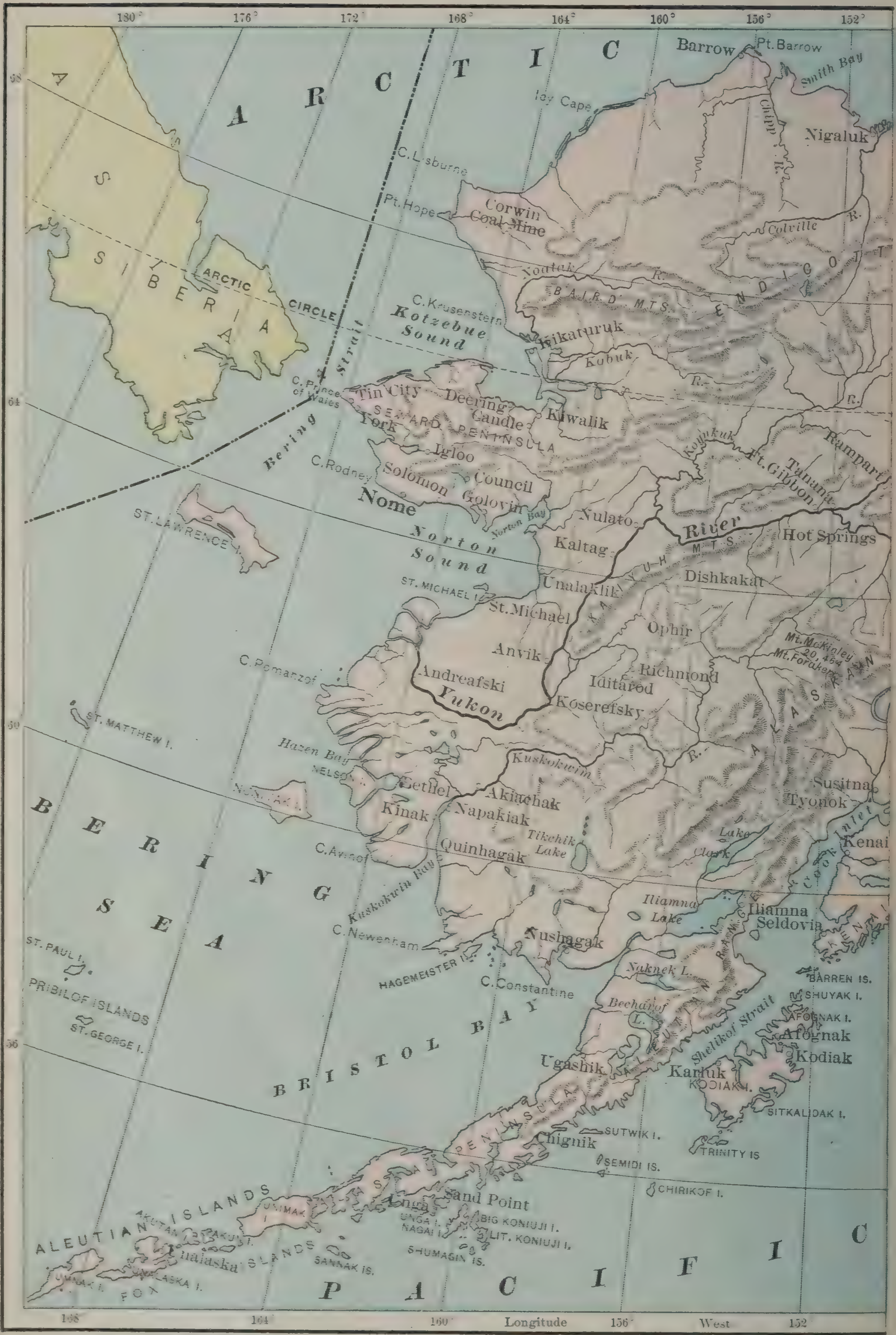
From a photograph by E. A. Hegg

section; but in fact they reflected very well what in that time was also the Far West. For Thomas H. Benton, Senator from Missouri, at a time when that State was the farthest west in the whole Union, made this contribution from the Senate floor:

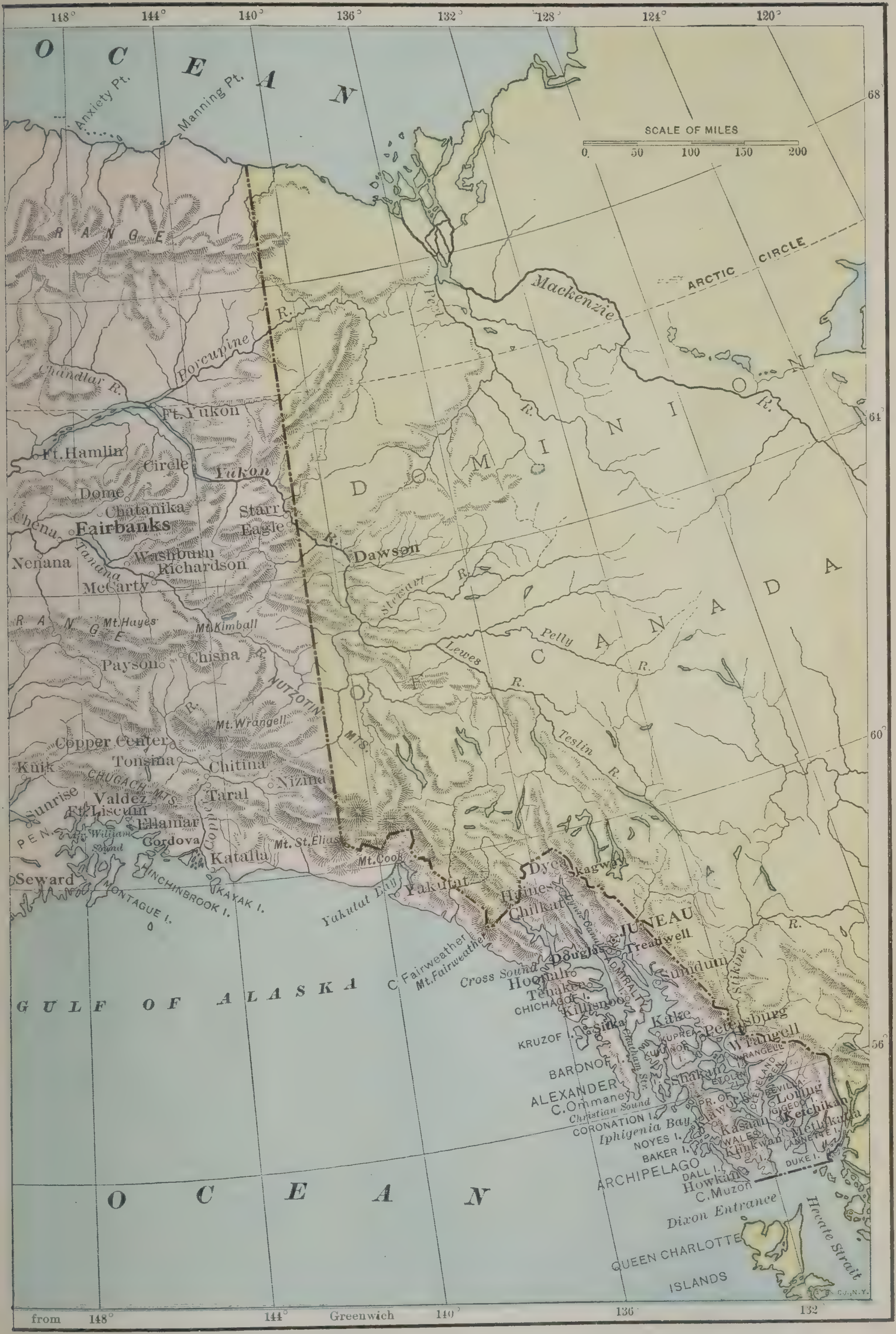
> The ridge of the Rocky Mountains may be named as the convenient, natural, and everlasting boundary. Along this ridge the western limits of the Republic should be drawn and the statue of the fabled god Terminus should be erected on its highest peaks, never to be thrown down.

To the delver into ancient legislative records, indeed, it is marvelous that the nation ever saved anything from the public domain that was laid at its door. Senator McDuffie of South Carolina declared his firm opinion that "if there ever was a country upon the face of the earth in which I should consider it a great misfortune for the poorest man to settle — any country blasted by God, which is utterly destitute of all conceivable attraction, scarcely capable of sustaining the life of humans, it is this very Territory of Oregon."

Senator Dayton of New Jersey knew all about the great Northwest, too: it was "as irreclaimable and barren a waste as the desert of Sahara; the climate so unfriendly to human life that the native population is dwindling away under the ravages of malaria."



GENERAL MAP OF ALASKA, SHOWING ITS RELATION TO SIBERIA AND ALSO TO THE DOMINION OF—
30,000 MILES OF COAST LINE, OR MORE THAN—



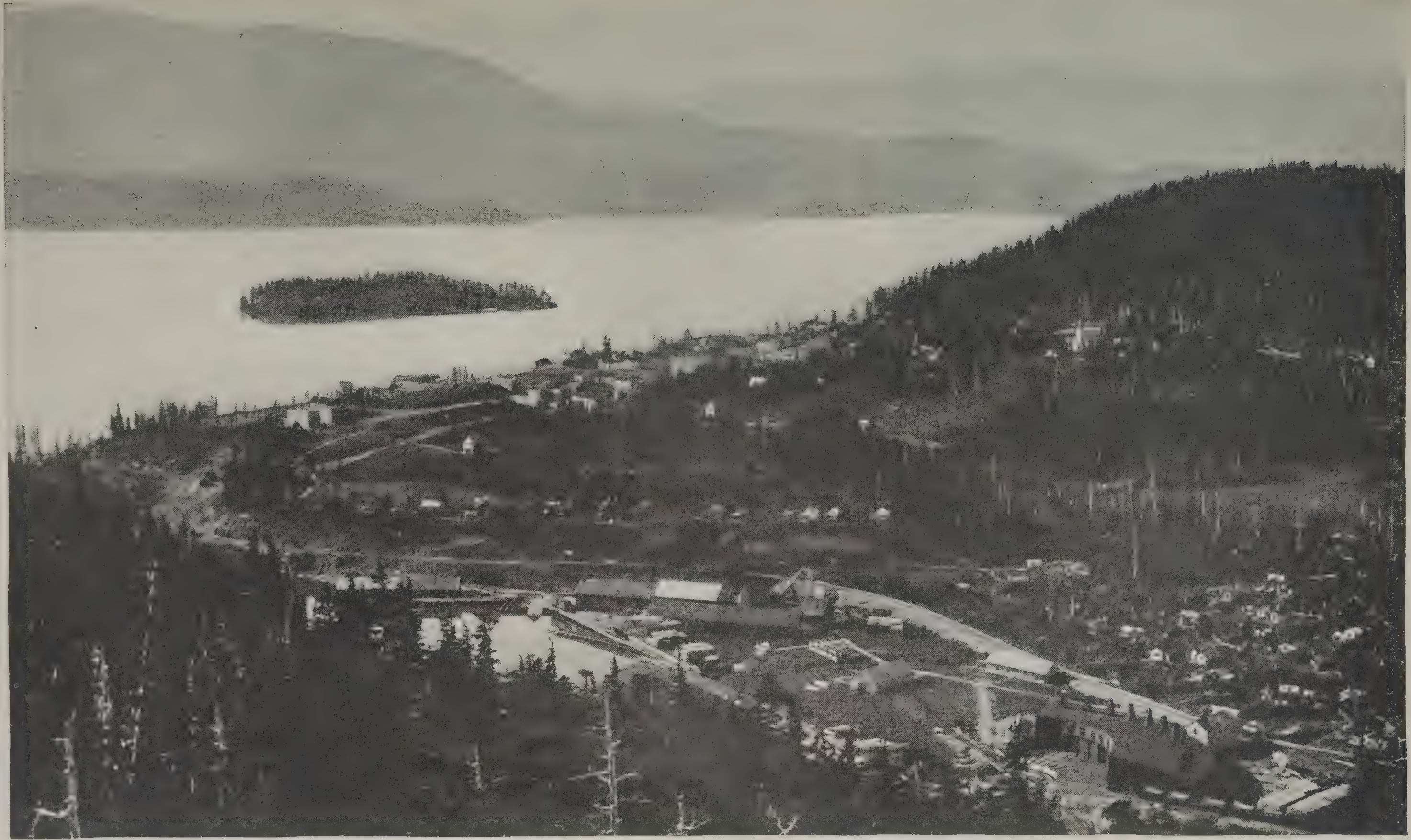
—CANADA. THE TERRITORY INCLUDES FULLY ONE THOUSAND ISLANDS AND HAS FROM 26,000 TO
—ALL THE REST OF CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

ALTHOUGH OTHER STYLES OF TRANSPORTATION ARE BEING INTRODUCED, THE WONDERFUL DOG-TEAMS OF "HUSKIES" AND RUSSIAN HOUNDS ARE USED ALL OVER THE TERRITORY

From a photograph by Dobbs

A RURAL MAIL ROUTE EQUIPMENT OFF FOR THE NORTH ON A ROUTE WHICH COVERS ABOUT 700 MILES, FROM NOME TO VALDEZ

From a photograph by Dobbs



CORDOVA, THE TIDEWATER TERMINUS OF THE COPPER RIVER AND NORTHWESTERN RAILWAY, GATEWAY TO THE COPPER AND COAL FIELDS

From a photograph by E. A. Hegg

THE OLDEST SETTLEMENT IN ALASKA, UNALASKA, ON THE ISLAND OF THE—

From a photo—

CHIEF KAT-A-SHAN'S
TOTEM POLE,
FORT WRANGLE

From a copyrighted photograph by Winter & Pond

In the light of these demonstrations of legislative intelligence on the subject of our mid-west and far northwest, it will have to be conceded that, after all, Alaska is getting far more discriminating treatment than those sections got. In order that Alaska may be saved to the service of the whole nation, and not exploited by any limited group or interest, it has been recognized that there must be public transportation; transportation organized for the single purpose of serving the whole community, and not with the end of promoting any monopoly. It has been realized that, in the peculiar conditions under which Alaska must be developed, the control of transportation means the domination of the Territory. Alaskan experience with privately controlled transportation in the last twenty years has pointed this conclusion.

It must have been an emphatic demonstration of the possibilities and the future of Alaska, that could induce Congress to reverse the traditional policy of the government and plunge into national railroad construction for the benefit of the Territory. What was there to say on behalf of Alaska, to win Congressional and Presidential approval for so revolutionary a program?

James Wickersham, the able and eloquent delegate from Alaska in Congress, said it in tabloid form when, in the course of a speech favoring the government railroad bill, he presented a balance sheet of the account between Alaska and the nation, from the time when Seward bought the Territory down to the close of 1913. There is little need to add to the figures that Mr. Wickersham presented. He found that the nation's account against Alaska was made up of these items: Purchase price, $7,200,000; general appropriations for Alaska since, $27,795,525.92; post-office expenses for Alaska, $6,564,642; total, $41,560,167.92.

That was what the national government had invested in Alaska. Now look at Mr. Wickersham's itemization of what the

—SAME NAME IN THE ALEUTIANS. HERE THE RUSSIANS FIRST SETTLED IN 1765

—graph by Dobbs

country has taken out of Alaska in that same period. It was made up from the best records, and is generally conceded to be very conservative: Gold, $228,512,471; silver, $2,037,280; copper, $16,074,625; gypsum, $647,345; marble, $555,443; tin, $88,062; coal, $340,189. Fur and fur products: Fur—seal skins, $52,042,528; other aquatic furs, $12,616,937; furs of land animals, $9,537,081; walrus products, $368,053; whalebone, $1,707,410; fishery products, $182,569,625; total cash receipts, $15,588,278.72. Total, $522,685,327.72.

More than half a billion of wealth had come out of this "Arctic waste" in a generation of our national ownership! Moreover, during most of that generation the nation was utterly without conception of the possibilities of the Territory. Its population has been and is ridiculously small considering the range and extent of opportunities it presents. Even now, despite that we have been learning in recent years something about what Alaska is and what it means to us as a nation, it has only about 65,000 people (census of 1910) and in the decade from 1900 to 1910 gained only 764. Almost half the population is composed of Indians.

Early suggestions of public construction of railroads were greeted with widespread protest. It was a policy that had never been favored by this country. Private enterprise had given this nation its great transportation system, embracing nearly half of all the railroads ever built in the world. The proposal to adopt so radically different a policy was viewed with alarm. Moreover, while students of Alaska's peculiar and unique situation were beginning to understand why that situation demanded a new kind of treatment, the number of these understanding ones was small. It was necessary that an adequate conception of the conditions should sink into the mind of the people and their official representatives.

Thus the Alaska situation reached an impasse; a deadlock. Development substantially ceased. It

CHIEF SHAKES TOTEM POLE,
FORT WRANGLE

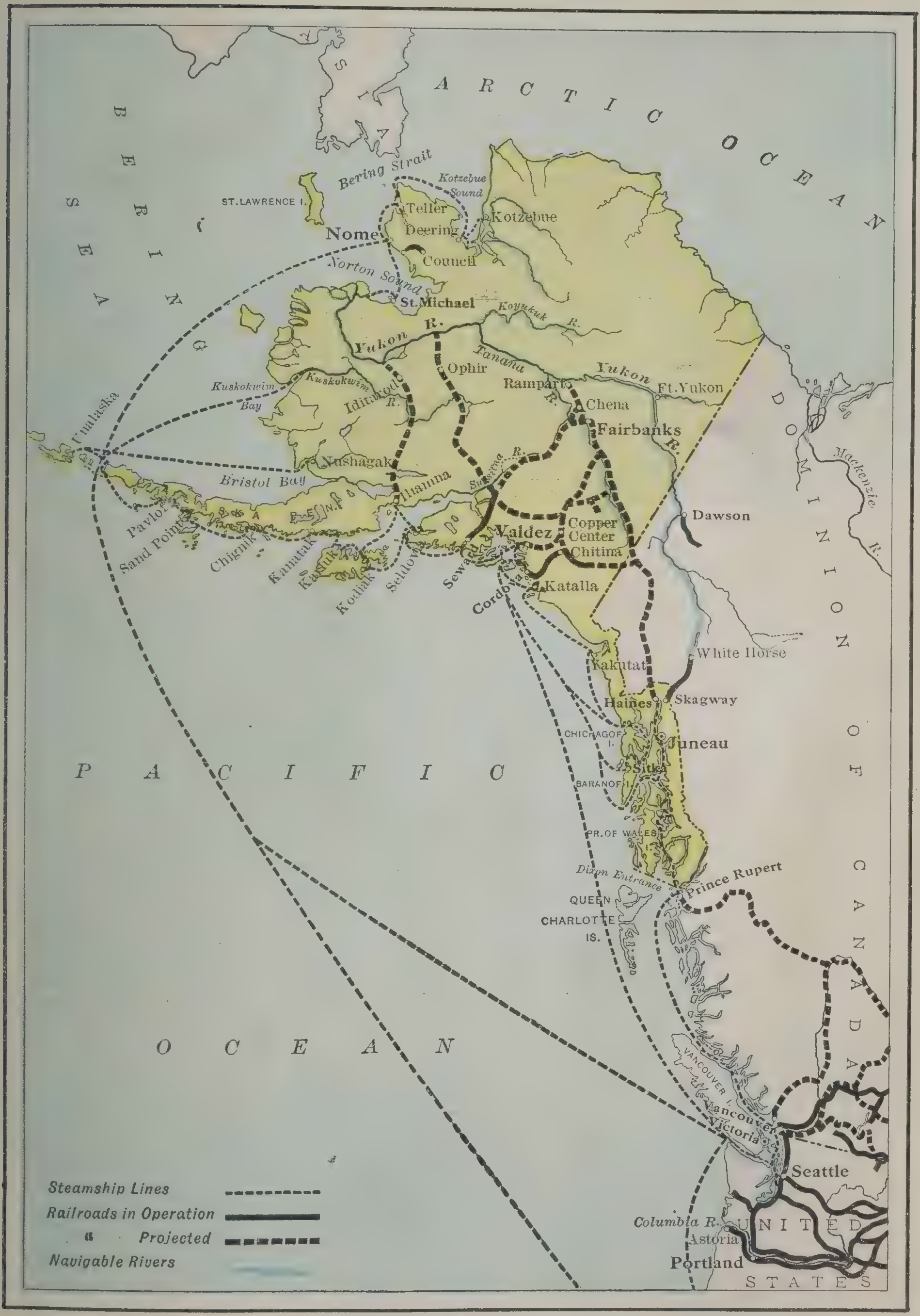
From a copyrighted photograph by Winter & Pond

A BIT OF ALASKAN WOODLAND, WITH A VIEW OF LOVERS' LANE, ON THE OLD RUSSIAN ROAD NEAR SITKA

From a photograph by Merrill

KUSKULANA BRIDGE ON THE COPPER RIVER AND NORTHWESTERN RAILWAY. A FEW MILES AWAY IS THE BONANZA COPPER MINE

From a photograph by E. A. Hegg



THIS MAP SHOWS THE VARIOUS RAILROAD ROUTES SUGGESTED BY THE ALASKA RAILWAY COMMISSION TO OPEN THE COUNTRY AND COORDINATE THE WATER AND RAIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

CELEBRATING THE FOURTH OF JULY IN THE FAR NORTH. THE MEN'S TWO HUNDRED YARD DASH ON McKINLEY AVENUE, VALDEZ

From a photograph by P. S. Hunt

was hard for Alaska; disappointing to ambitious men anxious to take a hand in upbuilding our newest and last northwestern empire. But now that an early end is assured to this period of suspense, it is beginning to be suspected that neither Alaska nor the nation will in the end be the worse for taking time enough to think matters over. Alaska and Alaska's friends have displayed an enthusiasm over the program now adopted, which testifies their conviction that the business has at length been started on the sound and right basis.

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this experiment that the government is undertaking. Not merely as to Alaska, but with relation to the whole country, it is the most tremendous departure ever made by the government from the conservative lines traditionally adhered to throughout our economic development. In earlier phases of Western development, the government was wont to give away the public lands in order to get railroads built through them. Now it is determined that the government shall build the railroads in order that the public domain may be saved.

Let it be understood that " saving the public domain " in Alaska, under this new

SOCIETY FUNCTIONS IN ALASKA. THE TEAM HAS BEEN—

From a photo—

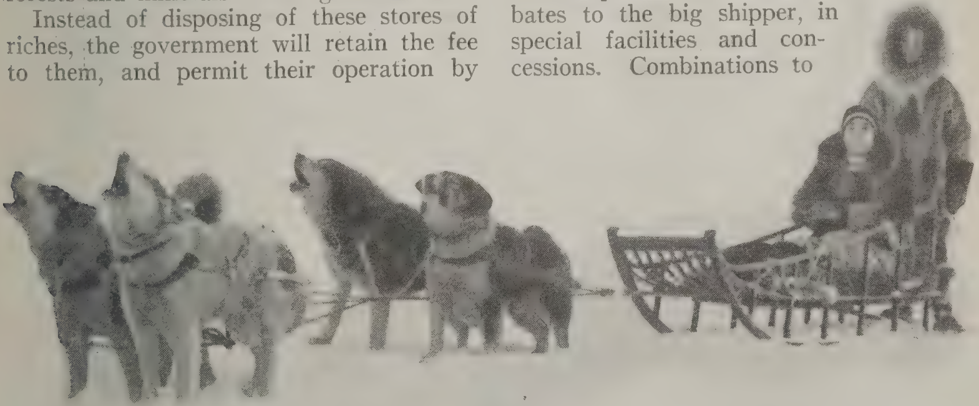
THE MIDNIGHT SUN BASEBALL GAME AT FAIRBANKS. IT OPENS AT MIDNIGHT, JUNE 21, EVERY YEAR, AND IS FINISHED BEFORE SUNDOWN!

From a photograph by Huey & Hyland

policy, does not mean that it is to be locked up and guarded against growth, enterprise, improvement. It means merely that the great natural resources of the Territory, in forests, gold, copper, coal, tin, marble, fisheries, agriculture and what not, are to be held for the use of the people, in the interest of the people. Inevitably and inseparably connected with the policy of government railroads, will go the other policy of keeping title to the mines and forests and minerals in the government.

Instead of disposing of these stores of riches, the government will retain the fee to them, and permit their operation by lessees, under royalties. Thus the government will get its modest tribute. But vastly more important, it will reserve to itself the privilege of fixing terms on which development may be conducted. It will permit no monopoly, no unreasonable exactions, no extortions. It will insist on equal terms and a square deal to all comers.

The small operator with modest capital will be assured the same chance as the great corporation. There will be no favors in transportation rates, in rebates to the big shipper, in special facilities and concessions. Combinations to

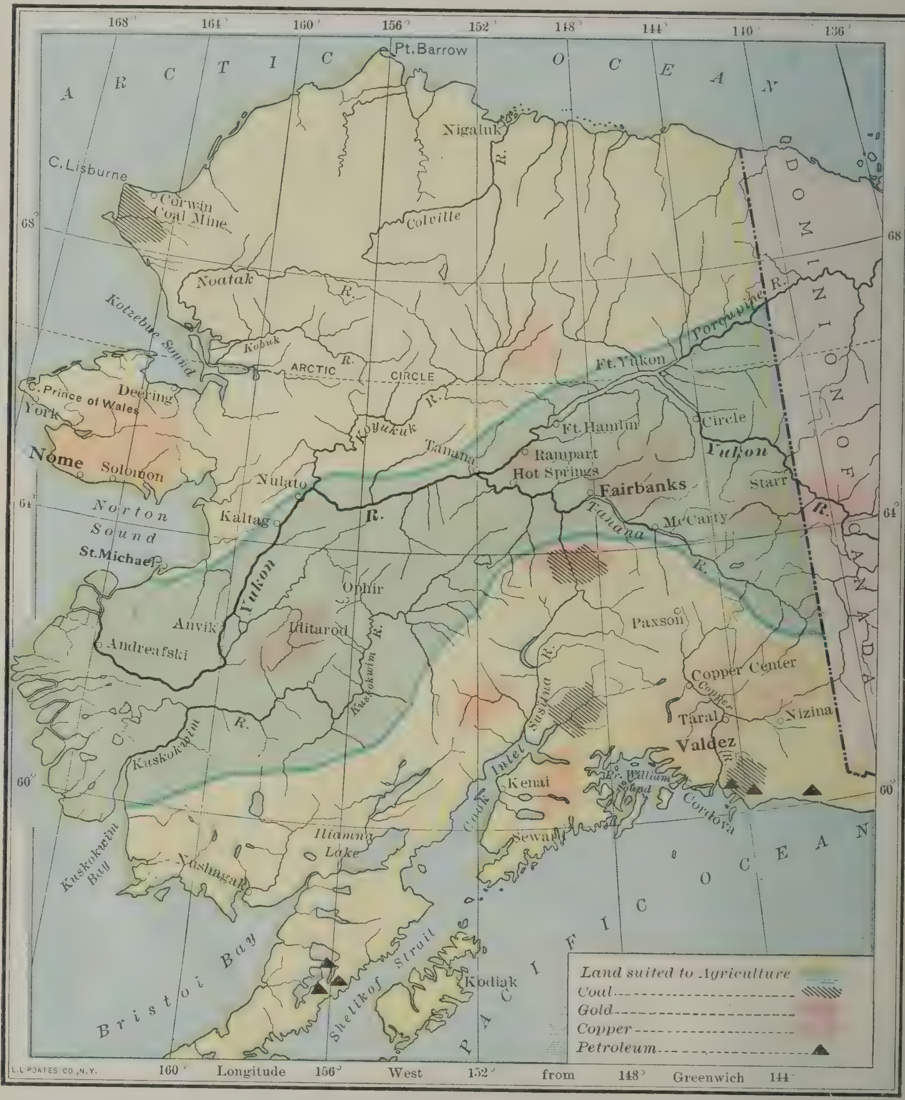


—HARNESSED READY FOR A TRIP TO A NEIGHBOR'S CAMP

—*graph by Dobbs*

3

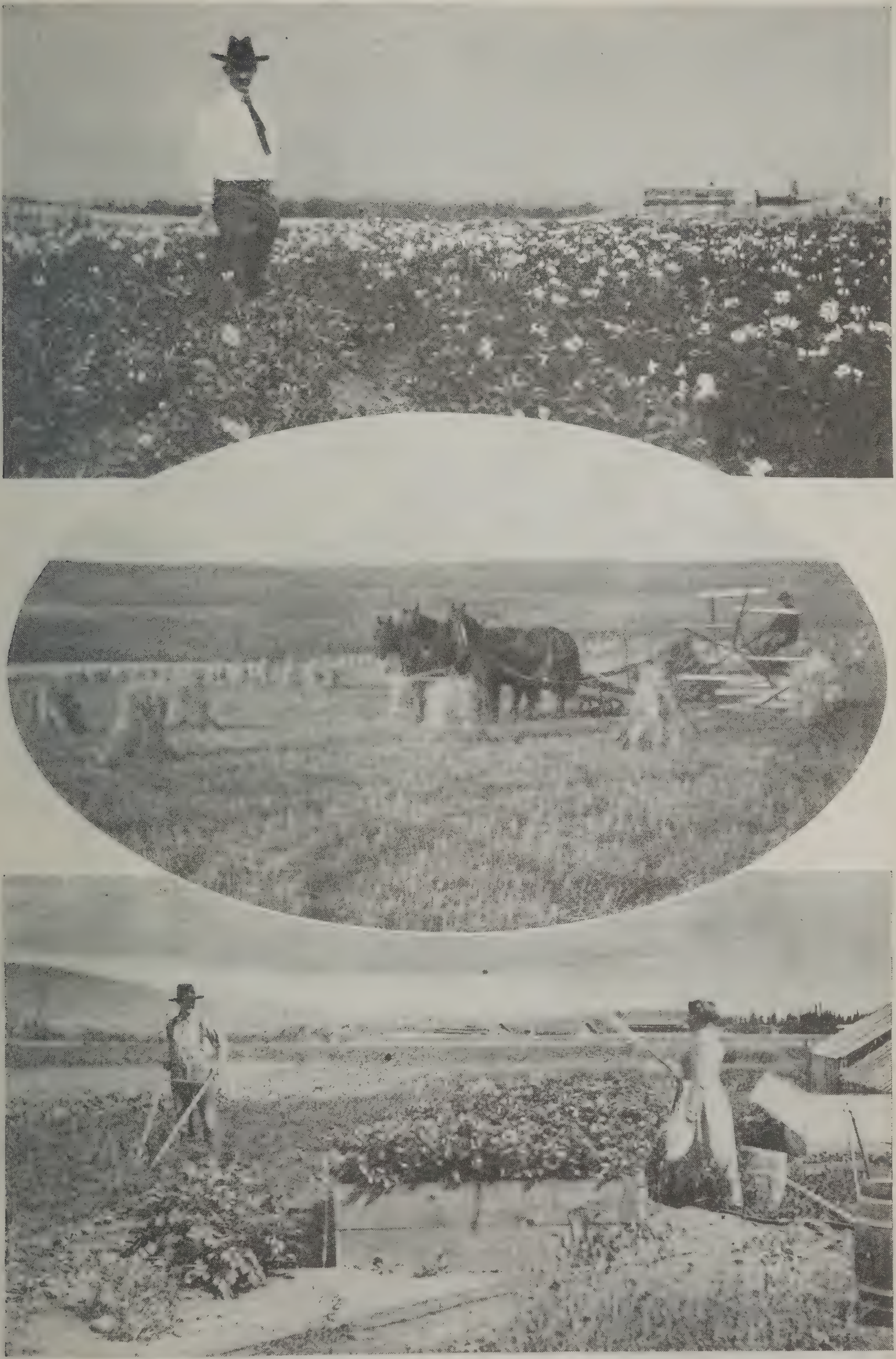
overpower or freeze out the small man will not be permitted; attempts of that kind will mean forfeiture of the right to operate the lands of the government under the leases. Alaska, in short, is to be subjected to the experiment of free opportunity under equal conditions.



MAP SHOWING THE GENERAL LOCATION OF THE VARIOUS GREAT MINERAL AND METAL AREAS OF ALASKA, AND THE VAST EXTENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND THAT WILL ONE DAY BE THE REAL SUSTENANCE OF THE TERRITORY

Let us see what Alaska is to-day. The Alaska Railway commission describes it as a country "comparable in size, resources and climate to Norway and Sweden." Norway and Sweden have just about 300,000 square miles and 8,000,000 people.

In making this comparison, the Alaska Railway commission has been conservative; it has cast aside about 300,000 square miles of Alaska as barren, worthless, and too cold; yet it is still able to retain 300,000 miles, and finds it comparable to Norway and Sweden! That is almost a third the area of the United States east of the Mississippi; almost five times New England; and it is held capable of sus-



THE TOP PICTURE SHOWS A POTATO PATCH WHICH YIELDED ABOUT THREE TONS TO THE ACRE, THE CENTER PICTURE A SELF-BINDER IN OATS, AND THE LOWER ONE A TRUCK GARDEN, ALL IN FAIRBANKS

The middle picture from a photograph by Robertson taining a population — for Norway and Sweden do — three times that of the colonies when they attained independence!

WALRUS HEADS AND TUSKS. UNLESS THE WALRUS IS PROTECTED BY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT, THE PERSISTENT HUNTERS OF THE SEA, SEEKING THE IVORY, WILL SOON EXTERMINATE IT

From a photograph by Dobbs

But the railway commission has been extremely conservative in its estimate of the possibilities, the natural wealth, of Alaska. The comparison with Norway and Sweden is suggested merely by the fact that the Scandinavian peninsula is in the same latitude and has about the same climate as Alaska. But after that, everything is in favor of Alaska.

The Scandinavian peninsula has no gold; Alaska has given the world $228,000,000 of it and not scratched the surface of its possibilities.

There is no copper in Scandinavia. Alaska has produced over $16,000,000 of merchantable copper, in the earliest infancy of development, and all the world

INDIAN VILLAGE OF HOONAH, ALASKA, SHOWING THE ARTISANSHIP OF THE NATIVES AND SUGGESTING THE CIVILIZATION THEY ARE DEVELOPING

From a photograph by Case & Draper

now knows that its deposits of this metal are among the richest, not unlikely the very richest, in the world.

Scandinavia has no tin. Alaska doesn't know how much of this rare and very valuable metal it has, but does know that it has already produced some and has assurance of great development in this direction.

Oil has been found in many places in Alaska, and all the geological indications point to the probability of very valuable developments. But for the present most of the lands on which oil is likely to be found are in the public domain and withdrawn from the privilege of entry and development, in line with the general policy of protecting the country from being monopolized.

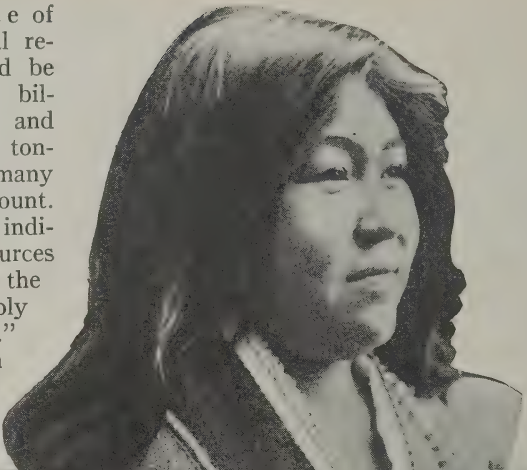
Imagination runs riot with the figures on Alaska's coal supplies. Alfred H. Brooks, of the United States Geological Survey, for many years in charge of investigations of the geology and mineral resources of Alaska, reaches the conclu-

AN ESKIMO CHILD AT NOME, WHITHER THE ESKIMOS COME TO TRADE

From a photograph by Dobbs

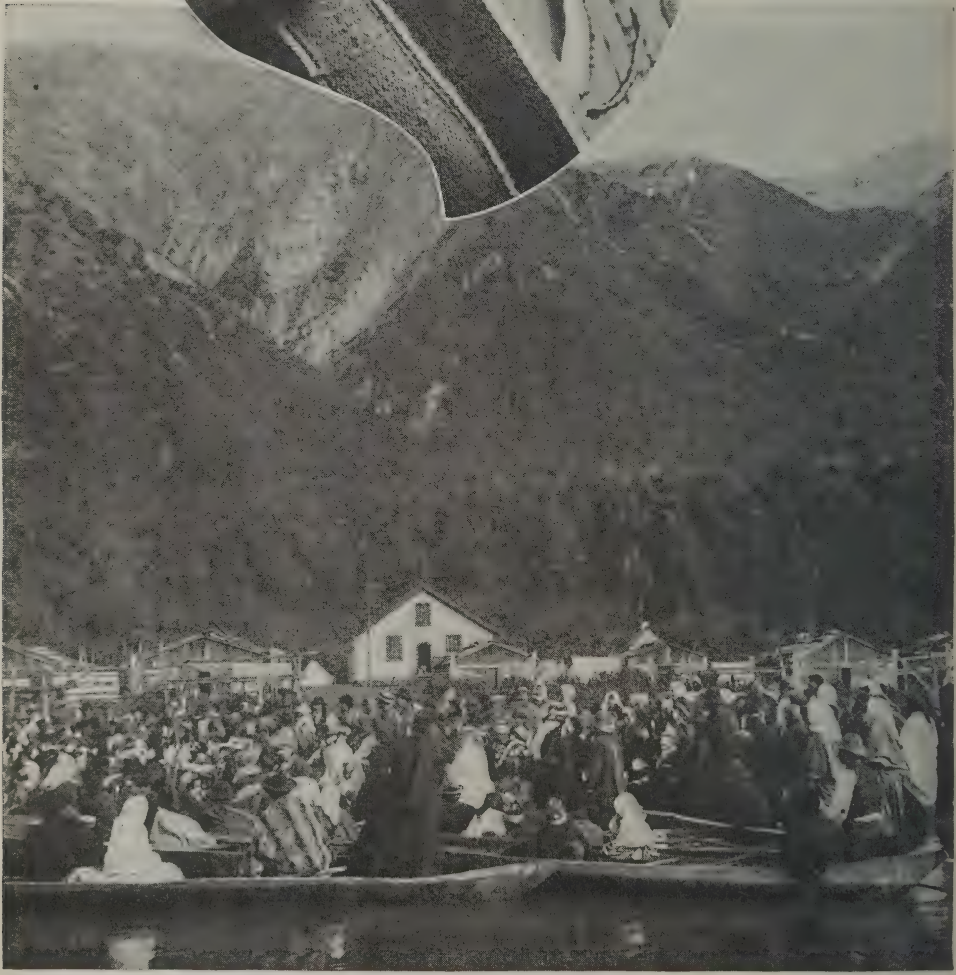
sion that "the minimum estimate of Alaska's coal resources should be placed at 150 billions of tons, and that the actual tonnage may be many times that amount. These figures indicate coal resources far in excess of the original coal supply of Pennsylvania."

An illustration of what this prodigality of coal resources means in the development of Alaska is afforded by a little incident that took place a few days after the passage of the railway construction bill in Congress. Delegate Wickersham called on Secretary of the In-



"PORCUPINE MARY," A WELL-KNOWN MEMBER OF THE HIGHLY INTELLIGENT CHILKAT TRIBE

From a copyrighted photograph by Case & Draper



GATHERING OF CHILKAT INDIANS FOR "POTLATCH," A CEREMONY IN WHICH AN INDIAN OF SUBSTANCE BRINGS HIS FRIENDS TOGETHER AND DISTRIBUTES HIS PROPERTY AMONG THEM

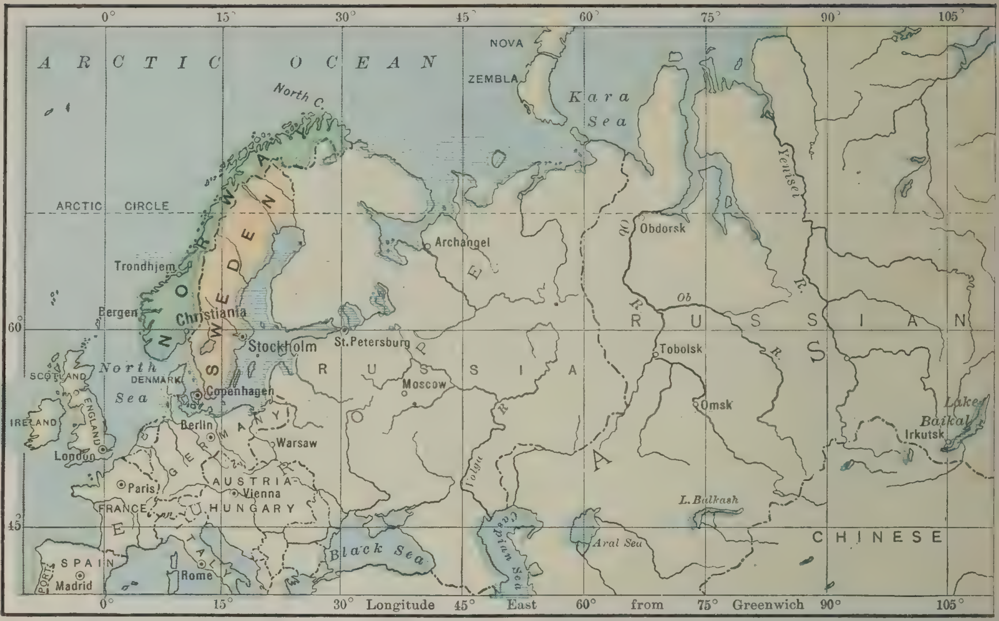
From a copyrighted photograph by Winter & Pond

PIONEER MINING COMPANY'S ANNUAL CLEAN-UP AT NOME. THE WINTER'S DIGGING OF GOLD-BEARING GRAVEL IS CLEANED UP AS SOON AS THE WATER FLOWS IN THE SPRING

From a photograph by Dobbs

SOME GOLD BRICKS THAT ARE THE REAL THING. ONE WEEK'S OUTPUT OF THE PIONEER MINING COMPANY AT NOME, WORTH $260,000

From a photograph by Dobbs



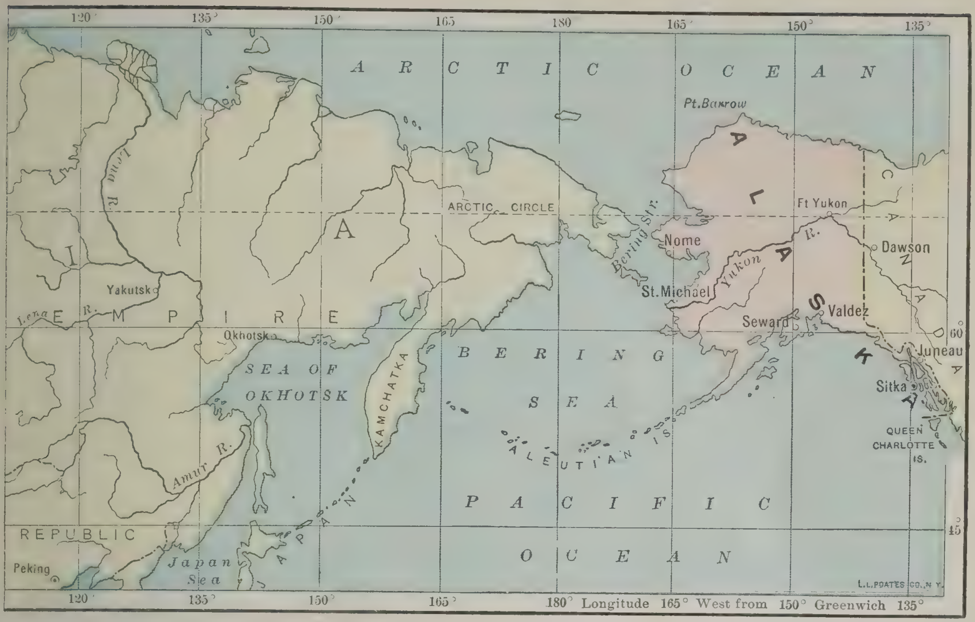
HERE IS THE MOST GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION THAT CAN BE GIVEN OF THE COMPARISON BETWEEN—ALASKA LINES UP WITH SCANDINAVIA. IT IS EASILY CAPABLE OF—

terior Lane to suggest that one of the lines of roads that would be built would be almost certain to pass through the Nenana coal field, which is one of the most accessible and is expected to prove also one in which mining will be cheapest. Mr. Wickersham observed that with this immense supply of coal at hand the most feasible and economical program would be to operate the road by electricity, having the government produce the current from its own power plant, producing the power from its own coal, dug from its own mine! Discussion of the project so far convinced Secretary Lane of its feasibility that he promptly undertook to have it investigated in detail. Mr. Wickersham is confident that the Alaska railroad system will be equipped and operated electrically from its opening, and will be strictly the most up-to-date system in the world.

The coal in this Nenana field will be taken from mountains high above the level of the railroad grade, so that with the very minimum of expense it can be carried in chutes directly down to the bunkers along the tracks. But attention has been so long centered on Alaska's coal that we have been wont to overlook or minimize other resources of even greater value.

The Territory is in truth one of the very greatest repositories of mineral wealth in the whole world. For example, on some of the islands in southeast Alaska are wonderful deposits of the finest marble; far superior, it is said, to any other now known in America. What these deposits mean in the estimate of men who deal with marble, is suggested by the fact that the Vermont Marble Company has opened great quarries in these islands and is now shipping this marble to ports along the American Pacific, and even to the Far East. With the opening of the Panama canal it is confidently expected this Alaskan marble will find yet wider markets, because the cheap water transportation to which it is accessible will make possible its shipments to the eastern coast of this country and even to Europe.

Again, the development of Alaska's gold deposit has hardly begun. Most of the gold garnered there since the Klondike rush has come from the beaches of Nome and the placers which line the streams throughout a large part of the country. Geologists tell us that the great mother lodes from which these placer deposits are merely the scourings, are one day going to be located and developed by modern processes of mining and reduction and that they will produce gold in quantities



—ALASKA AND THE SCANDINAVIAN PENINSULA. THE PARALLELS OF LATITUDE SHOW EXACTLY HOW
—SUSTAINING AS GREAT OR EVEN GREATER POPULATION

far beyond the wildest imaginings of men who thus far have been dealing and calculating only by the crude methods and moderate figures that represent the limitations of placer production.

If Alaska is to become a great country, with that wide variety of interests which alone can insure lasting stability of citizens and institutions, it must develop an agriculture approximately capable of feeding a permanent population. The people who know Alaska best are confident that it will do this. The Alaska Railway commission comparison with Norway and Sweden is not enthusiastic enough quite to satisfy Mr. Wickersham, Alaska's delegate in Congress. He declares as his deliberate judgment that Alaska will one day maintain a prosperous population of ten millions. The studies of its soil and climate, and particularly the careful comparisons that have been made between its agricultural possibilities and those of Scandinavia seem amply to justify this.

St. Petersburg, with two million inhabitants, the capital of the vast western empire, might be moved due west along the very parallel on which it stands and set down in Alaska, blessed with a milder climate than it now possesses. The same may be said of Stockholm, the splendid capital of Sweden. Any map of the railway system of Continental Europe will show hundreds of miles of railroads, some as far north and some even farther, than those which the government is preparing to build in Alaska.

Dairying is one of the principal industries in Norway, and there are millions of acres in Alaska better adapted by climate, soil, and their variety of vegetable products, to this industry. Yet Norway not only produces all of its requirements in dairy products, but exports them. The cattle of Norway are inferior, and the experiment stations which the department of agriculture maintains in Alaska are developing better strains than are to be found in any other country so far north. Around Fairbanks hogs are raised quite extensively and with excellent profit. The maintenance of successful dairy herds to supply Alaska towns with dairy products is the most ordinary matter of fact to Alaskans.

The vast prairies of the interior valleys are in no notable respect different from those of our central agricultural States. The summer is short but the days are very long and vegetation grows under the almost continuous sunshine with luxuriance that astounds people from more southern latitudes.

A GROUP OF NATIVE ALASKA SCHOOL-CHILDREN REPRESENTING COLUMBIA AND THE STATES AT A FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION IN VALDEZ

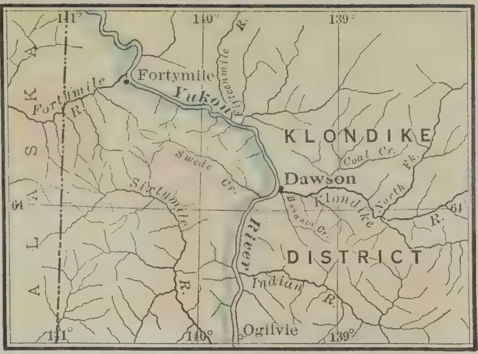
From a photograph by P. S. Hunt

QUARTET OF ESKIMO BELLES AT CAPE PRINCE OF WALES. FROM THEIR VILLAGE THEY CAN LOOK ACROSS BERING STRAIT ALMOST TO ASIA

From a copyrighted photograph by Dobbs

In connection with this reference to the long daylight hours of the northern country, though it has nothing to do with Alaskan agriculture, it may not be without interest to refer to the great annual midnight baseball game that is played at Fairbanks every year. The crack local team always plays some other contender for the Territorial championship on the night of June 21, the game being called at the stroke of midnight, when the sun is still swinging well above the western horizon. In a period of ten years or more that this annual contest has been a Territorial event, the midnight sun game has never yet been called on account of darkness.

Throughout these interior valleys of Alaska excellent crops of barley, oats and timothy are grown, while the native grasses furnish excellent forage for stock. Horses thrive throughout the country, and are fed on native grains and for-



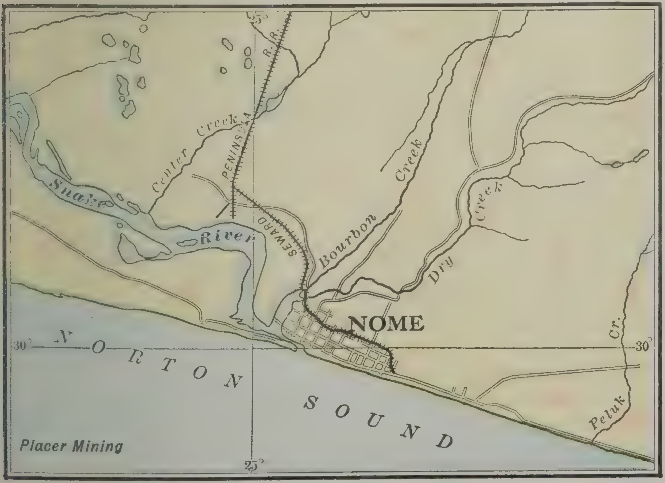
THE DAWSON-KLONDIKE MINING REGION ON THE ALASKA-CANADIAN BORDER

age. Root crops, particularly potatoes, turnips, carrots, and beets are grown with ease by the truck-gardeners for the towns, and an experiment with sugar-beets at Fairbanks produced such a tremendous yield and high sugar contents that enthusiastic Alaskans insist that the Territory will be found producing its own sugar supply before many years!

A number of years ago the national government imported several hundred reindeer from Siberia, in the hope that they would multiply and replace some of the game that had been recklessly destroyed because of the unrestricted license that had too long been enjoyed by hunters. This herd has prospered beyond all expectations so that at the end of last year its descendants numbered sixty-two herds scattered about the Territory, numbering about 46,000 animals and multiplying at an average rate of thirty per cent annually. The importance of this may be judged from the fact that in Norway, Sweden, and Lapland, the meat of reindeer is a large part of the staple food supply while the skins are very valuable. Lapland exports reindeer meat and hides very extensively, and there is no doubt that they will be very important among the products of Alaska before many years. The best authorities calculate that Alaska will easily maintain 10,000,000 to 20,000,000 head of live stock, and that exports of meat will reach a very considerable figure.

For a long period of years the Department of Agriculture has maintained Prof. C. T. Georgeson in charge of its experiment stations in Alaska. A native of Scandinavia, and an expert in the facts and methods of agriculture and stock raising in northern Europe, he has proved exactly the man for the work assigned to him. He has demonstrated the possibilities of agriculture in widely separated parts of Alaska.

One private gardener is credited with producing half a ton of cabbages on a half-acre of ground in the season of 1910. Rutabagas, carrots and other root crops, cauliflower, parsnips, celery, rhubarb, radishes, onions, cucumbers, peas and tomatoes are grown readily and regularly. The crops of these compare for quality with those found in the markets of all the United States cities, though they are grown as far as 1,500 miles north of the latitude of New York.



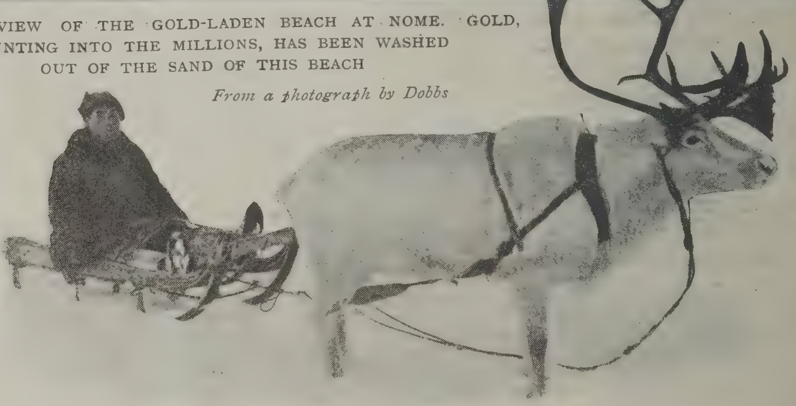
MAP OF THE REGION IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO NOME

Dr. Georgeson declares that all these crops can be raised successfully under normal conditions and with proper culture throughout all of the country south of the Arctic circle and even beyond it.

Not only is Alaska capable of producing all the timber and lumber it will require, but it will have a surplus. It is estimated that about one-fourth of the Territory's area is in forests and woodlands and that the area of good merchantable timber is rather larger than that of the State of Maine. Besides this there is an immense tract which produces timber of a quality not useful for lumber, but capable of being converted into wood-pulp, in quantities that will give the Territory a huge paper-making industry.

A WINTER VIEW OF THE GOLD-LADEN BEACH AT NOME. GOLD, MOUNTING INTO THE MILLIONS, HAS BEEN WASHED OUT OF THE SAND OF THIS BEACH

From a photograph by Dobbs

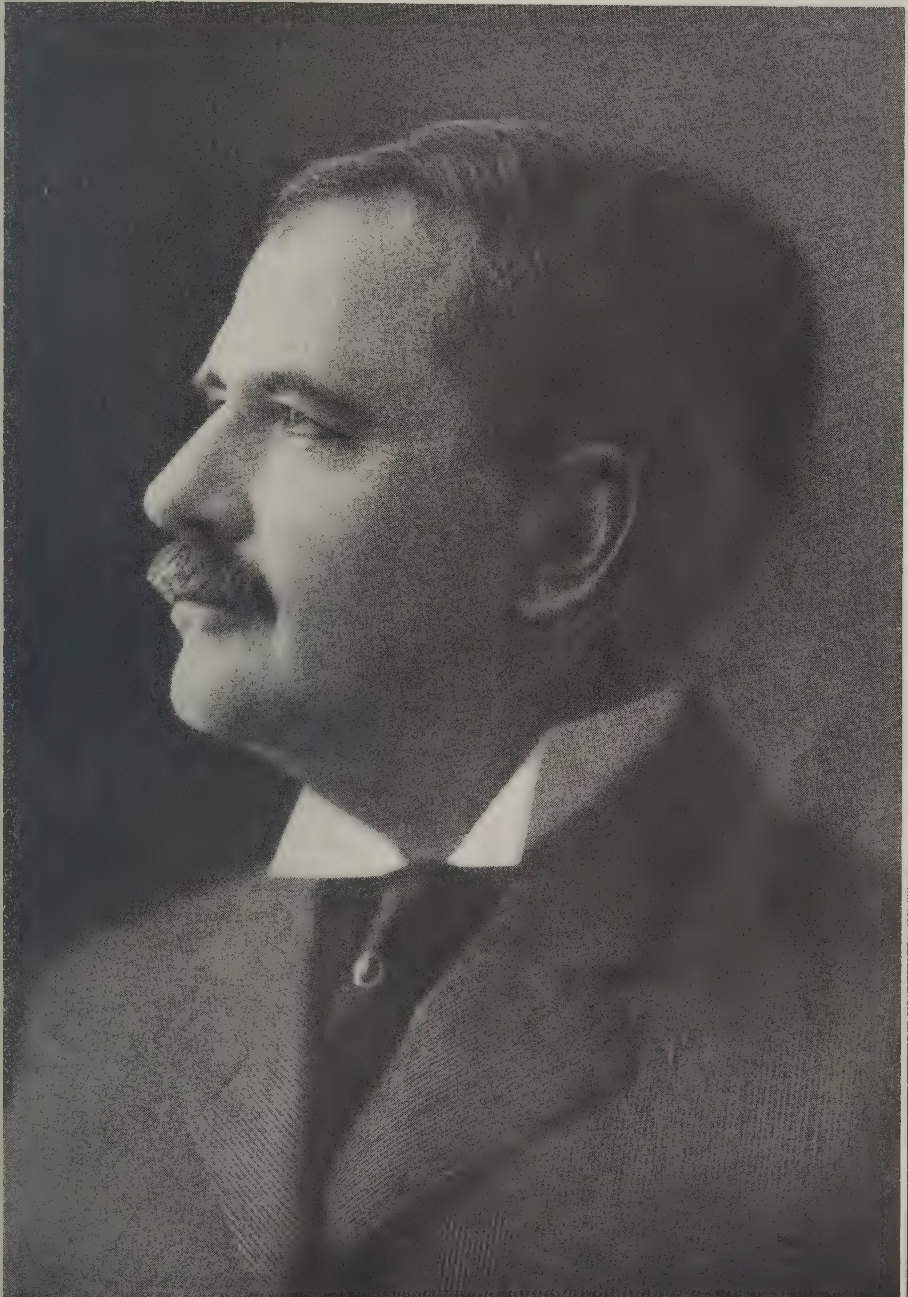


NATIVE REINDEER HERDER AT NOME. ALASKA'S REINDEER WERE BROUGHT FROM SIBERIA BY THE GOVERNMENT AND HAVE BECOME VERY NUMEROUS AND VALUABLE

From a photograph by Dobbs

The fisheries industry of Alaska has long been well developed, though it is capable of much greater expansion. In 1912 its products were valued at nearly $18,000,000, and the fishing grounds along both the north and south shores of the peninsula are said to be the most extensive in the world. In 1912 twenty-six new salmon packing establishments were built. Salmon, halibut, cod, herring, and other varieties of commercial fish are so plentiful that the catch is limited only by the demand, while the whaling industry along the coast and among the islands is growing constantly.

It is well known that the world's fur seal supply practically all comes from Tribilof and St. George islands in Bering Sea. Under the old system of leasing the fur-sealing privilege the herd of seals was so rapidly depleted that the Federal government has recently taken the whole business directly under its own charge. The herds are now said to number only about 125,000, whereas in former years there were 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 of the seals. Reckless destruction of the animals, poaching, and open seal killing have been responsible



JAMES WICKERSHAM, DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM ALASKA, WHO HAS DONE GREAT WORK FOR THE TERRITORY

From a photograph by Harris & Ewing, Washington

for this frightful decimation of the herd. Since the government has assumed direct control of the industry the numbers of the animals have already begun to increase.

This very general and inadequate survey of the immensity and variety of Alaska's resources can do no more than suggest the grounds for the confident belief that Alaska is perfectly capable of sustaining a population of several millions of people. But in every consideration of the Territory's resources and possibilities the logic inevitably travels around in a circle and returns to the conclusion that monopoly of transportation must involve monopoly of the resources, because these are so absolutely dependent upon transportation.

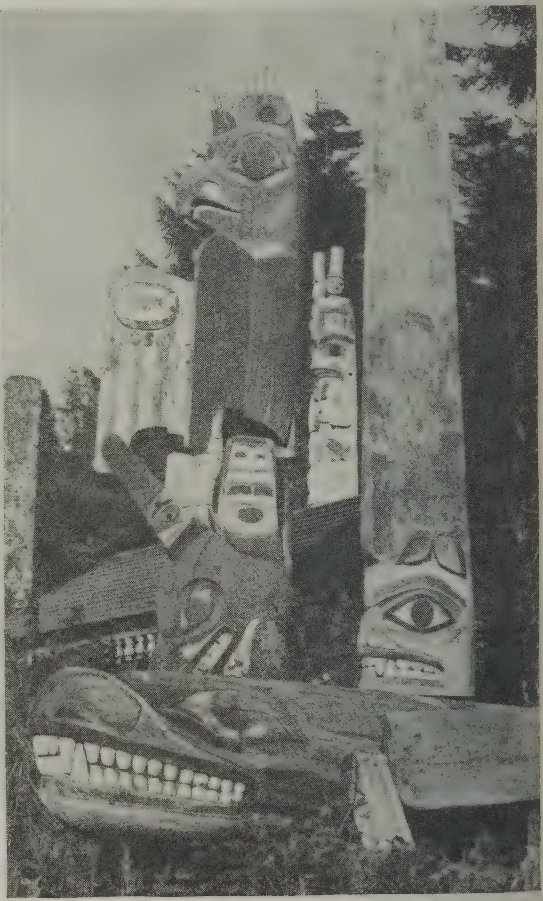
To make this empire what it ought to be and can be made, it is proposed that the government shall build the railroads necessary to open it for development. A rough, general idea of Alaska, geographically, may be given in a few words.

Chop off, first, the long, panhandle strip that extends southeasterly along the Pacific coast. Then blot out the long Alaska peninsula that runs off five hundred miles southwesterly into the Pacific. You have left a rectangular territory, lying almost "square with the world," bounded on the north by the Arctic Ocean, on the east by Canada, on the south by the Pacific, and on the west by Bering Sea.

You can now cut off approximately the northern one-fourth of your rectangle, that is, the great northern plain that drains off into the Arctic Ocean. About midway between the Yukon river and the Arctic Ocean is what Alaskans call the northern mountain barrier, a great mountain range extending from southwest to northeast, which divides the basin of the Yukon from the Arctic slope. Everything south of this mountain barrier is in the watershed of the Yukon. And it is the Yukon valley that is the real heart and body of Alaska.

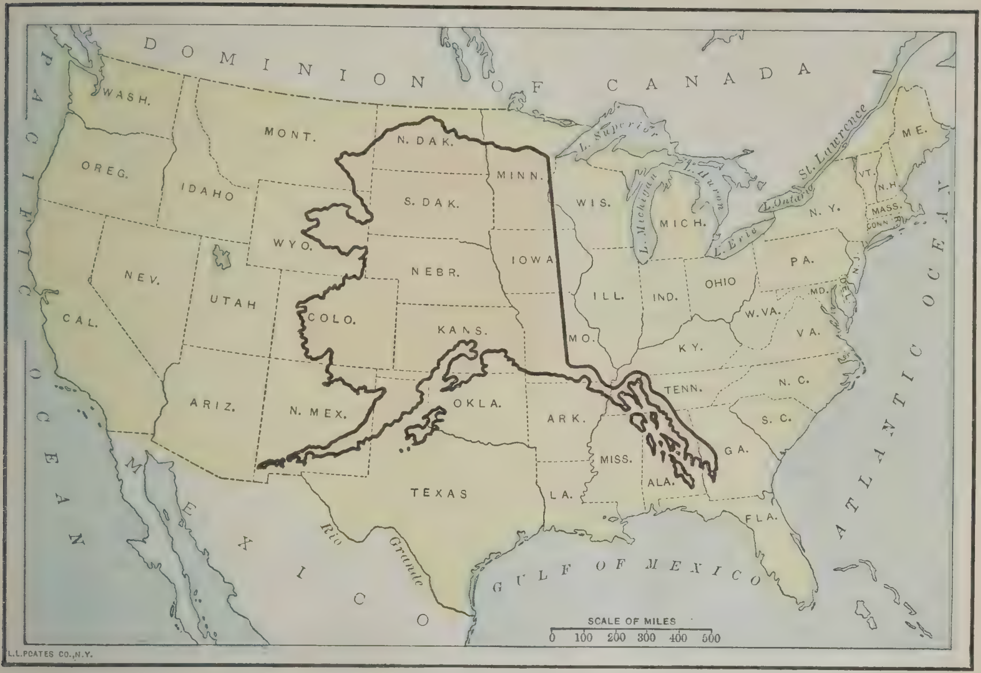
For the purpose of present consideration, we may now forget all about the region north of this mountain barrier. Much of it, indeed, is useful and available. Some day it will be developed. But it is not available for development at this time, and is not included in present plans for railroad building.

These plans concern exclusively the valley of the Yukon. We must now attempt to get a general idea of the physical aspects of this southern three-quarters of Alaska which Uncle Sam is about to open



THE GRAVE OF A MEDICINE-MAN, THE MOST POWERFUL MEMBER IN AN INDIAN COMMUNITY

From photographs copyrighted by Winter & Pond



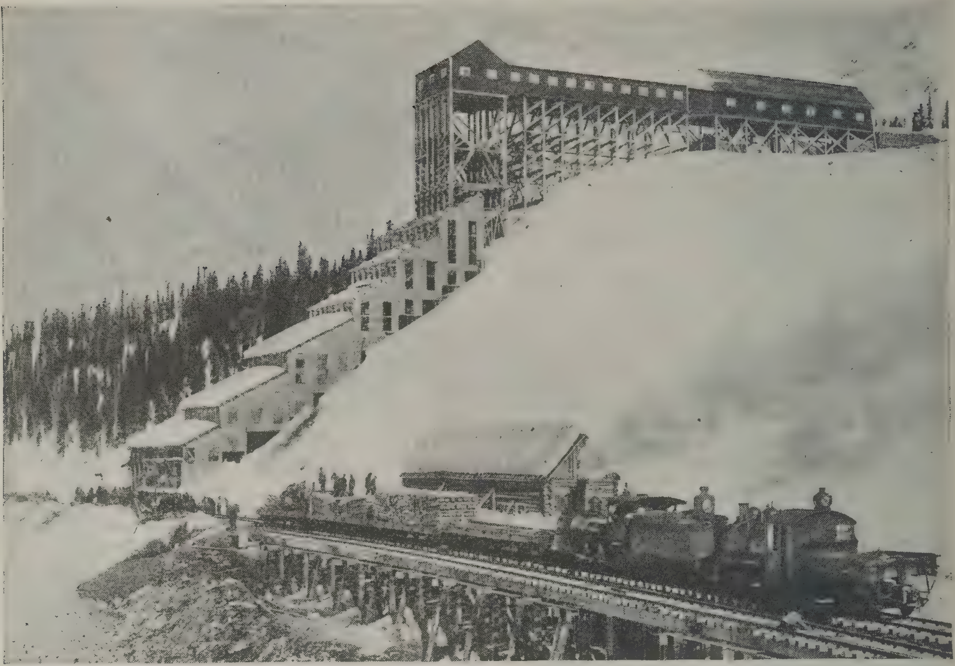
A STRIKING SUGGESTION OF THE SIZE OF ALASKA IS HERE CONVEYED BY SUPERIMPOSING THE MAP OF THE TERRITORY ON ONE OF THE UNITED STATES, BOTH DRAWN TO THE SAME SCALE

up by the bold project of supplying it with government railroads. East and west, the Territory is about six hundred miles long; north and south, it varies from four hundred to five hundred miles in width. Along the southern littoral are the coast ranges of mountains, running down close to the broken shore line. Temperamental rivers bent by glacial torrents burst through these mountains and empty into the Pacific. The mountains are filled with Alaska's metal and mineral wealth in copper, coal, gold, tin, marble, and almost everything else that the mineralogist might enumerate. Along the southern coast are some good harbors.

Just back of this coast range of mountains and occupying most of the area of our Alaskan empire, lie the great plains which constitute the valley of the Yukon. It is well-nigh impossible to give a description of the Yukon valley that in brief space can convey an impression of its immensity. Though their names sound strange in our ears, yet the great tributaries of the Yukon are streams which we can compare only with the Ohio, the Missouri, the Tennessee, and the other chief confluents of the Mississippi. The Yukon itself is one of the first three or four rivers of the world; calculations have been made which show that it actually empties more water into Bering Sea than the Mississippi carries into the Gulf of Mexico.

In a general way the course of the Yukon is from east to west, its rise being in northwestern Canada and about two-thirds of its length in Alaska. Its great tributaries include the Tanana, the Koyukuk, the Kantishna, the Beaver, the Porcupine, the Pelly, the Stewart, the Lewes, the Teslin, the Chandlar, the Innoko, and a long list of others that might be named, all of them navigable for great distances. Altogether the Yukon and its navigable tributaries provide Alaska with more than 6,000 miles of excellent water routes available for commercial transportation by large steamboats.

This network of rivers reaches to all parts of the Alaskan interior between the southern mountain range and the northern mountain barrier as already described. These rivers are ice-free and available for navigation from about the middle of May until about the middle of November each year. It is safe to count on five months of good, safe, open water in them annually.



RAILROAD STATION AND SECTION OF THE UPPER WORKS OF THE BONANZA COPPER-MINE, SAID TO BE THE RICHEST OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD

From a photograph by E. A. Hegg

ETERNAL SNOWS ON THE MOUNTAINS OF BARANOV ISLAND, BACK OF SITKA. SOME OF THE NOBLEST SCENERY IN THE WORLD LINES THE COAST FOR THOUSANDS OF MILES

From a copyrighted photograph by Merrill

Present projects for building railroads in Alaska deal only with the southern half of the Yukon valley, that is, with the country south of the great river. It is therefore necessary to inquire about this portion of Alaska lying between the Yukon on the north and the Pacific Ocean on the south. It is a region of perhaps 300,000 square miles. In its eastern section the valley of the Tanana, and in the western section that of the Kuskokwim are the controlling physical features. The Kuskokwim is not a confluent of the Yukon, though it is a stream that might fairly be compared for volume and length to any of the rivers in the United States aside from the Mississippi and the Missouri.

The Tanana rises in the extreme southeast and flows northwest, emptying into the Yukon. The Kuskokwim rises in the central section and flows southwest into Bering Sea. Each has something like 600 miles of navigable length, besides many navigable confluents. For length, volume, and navigability either may be compared to the Ohio.

There is an outline of the region which is to be opened by the new transportation system. Keep in mind, now, that the mighty Yukon lies all along the northern border. Measure it with a rule on the map, and it is 600 miles from where it enters Alaska on the east to where it flows into Bering Sea on the west; perhaps 2,000 miles as you would navigate it.

These great rivers must be made to carry a vast part of the heavy traffic of the country; and they will do it if railroad rates are so adjusted as to let them do it. Government ownership, we are assured, means such an adjustment of rates as will permit the rivers to do their share of the work. With private ownership of the railroads, it has been argued, the traffic would be driven off the rivers by the unfair competition of the railroads, or else the boat lines would fall into the hands of the railroad interests and their competitive value would be lost.

The problem of Alaskan railroad development, in brief, is to make the most of the coastwise and river routes, and to connect and supplement them with the railroad lines. This is exactly what has been in the minds of the men who formulated the project of railroad building which Congress has adopted.

Here we confront one of the most important aspects of this revolutionary experiment the government is undertaking. Can the rivers and the railroads be made to work together, to harmonize, to supplement each other in the perfection of a transportation system? Especially, can a system of rivers which are available for navigation only half the year, be fitted into such a system?

For answer, the advocates of this experiment admit that this has not been done in the United States. The railroads have taken the business away from the rivers. But in Germany, where the railroads are mostly state-owned, the rivers have been utilized with great success. They have been systematically improved, deepened, canalized, slack-watered by dams, and connected together by canals. There, the government controls both railways and rivers, and makes them work together in a common service.

LINKING RAILWAYS WITH RIVERS

Certain kinds of traffic are largely surrendered to the rivers, because a big boat on an improved river has been found to do the business most economically. Germany doesn't encourage the railroads to monopolize the business at the expense of sound economics. It is freely charged that this country has permitted just that. The Alaskan experiment looks to determining whether we can make railways and rivers cooperate and supplement each other. If it shall demonstrate that we can, people will inevitably demand to know why we don't make more use of the great rivers in the States. That is one of the lessons our Alaska experiment is to teach us. The Alaskan system of roads will be built with special reference to this purpose and experiment of unifying railroads and rivers in one harmonious transportation system.

It will be of interest to know the manner in which these railroads are to be built. Before committing itself to the plan of government railroads, Congress had the whole subject investigated with great care by a special body of experts, the Alaska Railway commission, which studied and reported on routes aggregating 2,500 miles.

To begin with, there are already about five hundred miles of railroad in Alaska, all privately owned. The most important of these is the Copper River and Northwestern, running from the southern port of Cordova, 197 miles, up the valley of the

Copper River to the Bonanza copper mines. The railroad and the Bonanza mines as well are owned by the Alaska syndicate.

The Alaska Northern road starts at the port of Seward, also on the south coast, and has been built seventy-one miles north. These are the only two existing lines that seem likely to have important relationship to the development of the government railroad system. It seems likely that the Alaska Northern will be bought by the government and extended, while present indications are that the Guggenheims will be left undisturbed in possession of their Copper River and Northwestern.

THE CHICAGO OF ALASKA

One line suggested by the commission and recommended as feasible would start at Chitina, on the Copper River and Northwestern, and extend north three hundred and thirteen miles to Fairbanks. Fairbanks is the great interior center of Alaska and seems likely to be the center of the railroad system. Indeed, a study of the map of proposed routes strongly suggests that Fairbanks will one day be to the railroad system of Alaska about what Chicago is to that of the United States.

There is opposition to the construction of this Chitina-Fairbanks line on the ground that Chitina is not itself a seaport, but is connected with the coast by the Copper River and Northwestern. Thus if the government should start at Chitina it would really be building a branch of the Guggenheim road, and from the very outset would be more or less dependent upon that line. There is grave objection among Alaskans as well as government officials, to any plan that would make the government's road tributary to and dependent upon a line controlled by a private corporation. It is feared that complications resulting from this anomalous relationship might hamper the very purpose of independence which has inspired the whole project of government railroads. Therefore present prospects seem to be that the Copper River and Northwestern will be left in the hands of its present owners and the government roads will all be entirely independent.

A line from Kern Creek, near the head of Cook's Inlet, running northward to open up the valley of the Susitna River, 115 miles, is recommended by the commission. This would be the extension of the present Alaska Northern. In case this route were adopted, the Alaska Northern would be purchased or condemned and taken over by the government. A branch of the foregoing line is also recommended by the commission, about thirty-eight miles long, to open up the Matanuska coal field.

Another road which the commission strongly favors would run northwesterly from some point in the Susitna valley, 229 miles, to open up the extensive valley of the Kuskokwim River. A line from the harbor of Valdez on the southern coast is also suggested, to connect with the main through line to Fairbanks, and thus give Fairbanks an outlet to the excellent harbor of Valdez.

Yet another route suggested and discussed by the railway commission, though its present construction has not been recommended, would start at the harbor of Haines, in southeast Alaska, and run northwesterly to Fairbanks. This line would be about 638 miles long and would be an excellent route for opening up the valley of the Tanana River. The objection to it is chiefly political and lies in the fact that while the road would run from the American harbor of Haines to the American town of Fairbanks, about half the mileage would have to be in Canada. Obviously, it would be impossible for the American government to operate its own independent railway through Canada and the difficulties of achieving a satisfactory international agreement are such that for the present the route does not appear feasible.

Some other possible routes are discussed by the Alaska Railway commission in its report, but the ones here outlined seem most likely to include all that will be undertaken under the authority of the present legislation. Indeed, the present program places a limit of a thousand miles on the construction, and it is expected that the appropriation of $35,000,000 will have to be employed with the utmost economy if it produces the entire thousand miles. This would be at the rate of $35,000 a mile for construction, terminals, and equipment. If the government is able to build railroads in the far north at that figure it will really be a monumental achievement, for the Copper River and Northwestern, the Guggenheim line, is understood to have cost just about $100,000 a mile. It, however, is built on about the most expensive route by which the interior of Alaska could be reached, passing through the coast range of mountains, by way of the narrow and tortuous cañon of the Copper River.

Reading the legislation under which the Alaska roads will be built, one thinks of Panama more often than of Alaska; of the tropics more than the Arctic. For the plan is borrowed bodily from Panama. There is going to be another huge job for another George Washington Goethals of the far north. If the President can find the right man, he will be made the czar of Alaska railroads, just as Goethals was made the dictator of canal building.

The Panama canal has been built under the eye and orders of the President—starting with Roosevelt, continued by Taft, and completed by Wilson. The President was ordered at the outset to make his organization, select his personnel, exercise the widest discretion, and do the business. The real point was to give him full responsibility and full power. He got both, and made good.

Precisely that plan has been written into the Alaska railroad law. The President is to have surveys made, is to pick out the routes, to build the railroads, to sell the securities with which the necessary money will be raised.

When he has his railroads built he will decide whether they shall be operated directly by the government, or leased to some operating concern for operation under government espionage. The President is authorized, further, to buy any railroads now built in Alaska if he wants them and can get them on terms that satisfy him.

If he can't buy any existing road that he wants, he has power to condemn and take it!

More sweeping and comprehensive powers to do a big work with a free hand could hardly be imagined. The President, of course, will do just what was done in the case of the canal. He will pick his subordinates and make the kind of organization he wants through which to do the work. But at every point and in every detail he will be the supreme authority.

Already Alaska, and for that matter our entire Pacific coast, whose interests in Alaska are intimate and extensive, has responded to the encouraging message from Washington. Alaska sees the end of its long era of suspended animation. We have seen that between 1900 and 1910 the Territory gained less than 1,000 in population. Its gains in the next decade will be numbered by tens of thousands. There will be development such as Alaska has not known before; development of the solid, substantial, permanent sort, based on the assurance that at last the right kind of institutions and facilities are to be provided.

No presentation of the facts concerning this new Alaskan era would be either complete or just if it omitted acknowledgment of the great services rendered to his constituents and to the nation by James Wickersham, delegate in Congress from the Territory. It has been the peculiar good fortune of Alaska that in its pioneering epoch it was able to command the services of a man who can combine all the elements of practical statesmanship in the measure that Mr. Wickersham has proved himself to possess.

Mr. Wickersham first went to Alaska when McKinley was President, being appointed by Mr. McKinley as one of the Federal judges in the Territory. He knows Alaska to-day better than any other man in the world. He had the first real vision of the wonderful future that is now so manifestly assured.

The government railroad system will open the door of opportunity to Alaska. After that, the pioneering genius of the race which has carved this country out of a wilderness, and has done most of the work in a little over a century, may be depended upon to give Alaska the place it deserves and is splendidly worthy to occupy among the great new dominions of the world.

THINKING OF YOU

Your life may be the richer just to know
That anywhere and everywhere you go—
My thoughts, like homing birds, wing flight to you
And follow—follow—all the wide world through!

Florence Earle Buek

THE SPINSTER QUESTION

(DISCUSSION No. 4)

Because of the greater length of our novel this month and a very long article on Alaska, we are not giving so much space in this issue to the Spinster Question as we did in April. The one paper we are publishing, however, strikes us as extremely well expressed. Moreover, it comes from a spinster of tender age, giving us the view-point of a novice in bachelor womandom. For this reason it has a distinct value in the series.

The contributions to this discussion are multiplying rapidly, some of them coming from as far away as South Africa. This shows a very wide interest in the theme, and naturally there should be a wide interest in it, as it is a great human theme, none more so.

Of course we cannot print all these articles, and it would not be worth while to do so, as many of them present practically the same arguments. It is surprising to find the number of writers still contending for the ready-made children panacea for spinsters and for their consecration to uplift work.

Then, too, there is the other side to the discussion where feminine writers give their reasons for not marrying. And while these reasons differ with different individuals, they are much the same in essence in that, in the last analysis, all alike have thrown away their chances because the men didn't measure up to their ideals.

It is on this point that MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE injects another thought into the discussion. Isn't it a good deal better for a woman to make a rational compromise than to stand out for the ideal and never marry at all? Ideal chasing is a precarious business at best.

It is a great thing to recognize the law of compromise. Everywhere, from the cradle to the grave, in every phase of life, we must bow to this inexorable law of compromise. We recognize its force in our expenditures, in the food we eat, in the clothes we wear, in the place of our abode, in our life-work, in our social environment, in our religion, in our politics, and in everything except marriage.

Spinsters, for the most part, are spinsters because they have not reasoned straight. As girls they have compared the marriages open to them with their girl life, not with their life when youth has left them. If a girl could always remain a girl, retaining her spirit, her impulse, her temperament, and youthful charm, it would be quite another matter.

But this isn't according to God's scheme of life. The years of youth pass quickly, and then the long stretches of middle life and old age. These are the periods to reckon with, the periods for girls to consider in determining whether they shall marry or not. The young woman abounding in youth and fancy and health who compares her present life with the life she would probably have, marrying as she could marry, might well turn away from it. But comparing such marriage to spinsterdom and to an isolated, childless old age, she would reach a different conclusion. This is the thought MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE wishes to emphasize.—*The Editor.*

AS A YOUNGER SPINSTER SEES IT

WOULD you harken to the voice of one of the younger spinsters? I am just twenty-six years old, but I use the title "spinster" advisedly, for I have passed safely through my young loves and now, having reached a reasonable maturity, I confess that there is not a suitable mate for me anywhere within my horizon.

I live in a very dull, pretty little suburb, twenty minutes' train-ride from a large city, and our male population consists of boisterous schoolboys, numerous young men about the age of twenty-one, and a host of settled, respectable husbands of settled, respectable wives.

I am employed as a stenographer in the city, and in my place of business there is an absolute dearth of eligible men. I have never been guilty of the practise of making acquaintances promiscuously, though the opportunity frequently presents itself. Poverty and gentility are my heritage, and, as I am one of a good-sized family, the struggle of keeping up appearances and yet making ends meet is the very animated specter that has walked by my side from the cradle to the present year.

I will not burden your patience with a lengthy account of my humdrum existence, but I will say that, possessing the average girl's attractiveness and intelligence, I have had a few commonplace romances and two proposals—one from a man old enough to be my father, and I refused gently and honestly, and one from a boy who regarded marriage simply on the selfish side, and I refused gently and sadly.

In January we opened our eyes at "The Plaint of a Spinster." The picture of lonely weariness and despair it presented to a busy world, hurt one's heart in the reading, but left one somewhat puzzled concerning the writer. In March we perused with interest the spirited "Defense of Spinsters," which was evidently written in all sincerity, but was obviously a biting remonstrance to the contributor of January. In April there appeared various articles of merit on the subject, and now I shall be still another to take up the cudgels and discourse on the theme to my heart's content.

WITH THE FUTURE IN MIND

Putting aside the January contributor's apparent helplessness, and the March contributor's obvious belligerence, the fact remains that the great army of spinsters, whether we be twenty-six or forty-six, march through the journey of life, some with smiles and heads held high, some with tears and downcast countenances, according to our determination, our pride, our temperaments, and our environments, but every one of us with the same deep-rooted, never-to-be-denied desire in our hearts for the mate who shall complete and be completed by our individual being. And it is as insincere and narrow to point the finger of scorn at a woman whose heart-wail has become too unbearable for silence as it is weak and reprehensible to sit down with folded hands and do nothing but wail!

I look in my mirror and see the plumpness and rosiness that are mine yet a little longer and then no more. A number of my friends are marrying, some for convenience, some for honest affection, but the man that I could take as my own mate —the mate of my mind, my soul, and my body—believing that we should be able to stand shoulder to shoulder as good comrades, good soldiers in the stress of difficult every-day life, this man I have never found and possibly never shall find. And I say, as every normal, unmarried woman will say and has said: "What is there for me?" And always the clarion answer rings in my ears:

> Fight the good fight with all thy might,
> Christ is thy shield and Christ thy light.
> Lay hold on life and it shall be
> Thy crown and joy eternally!

And those who wail may answer: "What is there for me to fight? My life is a barren waste—empty and still!" Well, if there be no palpably threatening forces to combat, then fight the cruel, fantom imps of doubt, pessimism, and despair! Surely this is warfare enough, even though the clash of the steel and the noise of the battle be smothered deep in the recesses of one's own heart, unheard by an uncomprehending and careless world. And consider, too, is there no possible way of filling the vacant places — of creating new interests where the mocking shadows now are—of regaining a sane and every-day way of thinking and living?

I have found that almost every article written for the edification of unmarried women tells them in indefinite, theoretical, and high-sounding language "to get to work." Usually this mandate takes the form of the popular and often pretentious theory expounded by so many full-grown men and women, that every woman deprived of wifehood, motherhood, and domesticity may find a suitable outlet for her energies in social and philanthropic work. In some instances this is quite true, and to those indefatigable women who give their brains and wits and wills to the betterment of social and economic conditions I give my honor and deep esteem. But I have seen the strongest women prostrated under the strain of this labor which ofttimes is almost too heavy for feminine shoulders.

Perhaps I should revise this statement and say that the harvest is so plenteous and the laborers so few that these good women frequently stagger under their burdens. Therefore I would not attempt to dissuade any one from such work, rather would I help toward it, but my point is this: that out of the nine million spinsters of our land only a very small percentage of them are honestly qualified for public and social work. And the others (of whom I am one) what about them? Simply the work at hand—that is the only solution.

THE PANACEA OF BUSY HANDS

Take the case of our January spinster, who has sufficient income to keep up the old home and to live decently, with so much leisure time that she is losing her sense of true values. When her baby niece was left temporarily in her charge she " cut and sewed and basted " a complete little wardrobe for the child — and loved this work! Then the little one was taken away, and apparently our lonely sister sits down again and folds her hands.

Placed in a like position, I should do just this: I should provide myself with a goodly amount of material and should begin all over again to " cut and sew and baste," not only one little wardrobe, but a number of such outfits. And I should take great pains with this sewing, making the stitches firm and fine, and the seams so smooth that the tender little bodies of their prospective wearers should never be fretted by a rough edge. Then, if I could afford to do so, I should apply to the organized charities and learn from them just where needs of this sort were greatest and give these little garments to poverty-stricken little ones.

If my financial condition did not allow the giving away of this amount of material, I should sell my wares at reasonable prices to busy, overworked mothers. Then I should return home and make more garments of a like nature and repeat my former program. Hasn't our January friend ever considered an occupation of this sort? At least it would give no time for folded hands.

Perhaps the continuous touch of baby apparel would aggravate the perpetual heartache. I do not know. But it seems to me that an unwillingness to clothe needy little bodies simply because those bodies are not one's own flesh and blood would indicate a dog-in-the-manger attitude born of envy and hopeless spite.

Then again, if I may expound another commonplace idea, what fun and rejuvenation there might be in the millinery business! Every shop takes apprentices at certain times of the year. If I were lonely and empty-handed and had a small but regular income, I should learn to be a good milliner, and later on should undertake to run a small place of my own. And what creations I should indulge in! I am not a shallow woman nor a frivolous one, but a new and becoming hat gives me a sense of smug satisfaction that no other decoration can quite equal! And particularly the spring hats—what a wealth of flowers and ribbons and pretty things to handle!

FASHION TO THE RESCUE

Of course it would mean work, and hard work, too, but isn't that what our January friend wants? She may say she has passed the age when styles are interesting. Then turn back, friend, and indulge in a following of " modes " sufficiently to grow young again. Style may be foolish, but there are times when the perusal of a fashion-book will divert an overwrought feminine mind—for the moment at least.

Concerning one's fitness for certain tasks, I wish to state here, perhaps with seeming irrelevance, that I am personally acquainted with a woman who has made a tremendous financial success of her hair-dressing and beautifying parlor, and that woman is plainly and unmistakably homely!

I am not attempting to be facetious—merely sane and practical. I am intensely high-strung and blessed (or cursed) with the power of self-dissection and introspection, and I know that one can reach a point of distraction where discussion concerning the good of one's soul is merely maddening. And the thing to do then is to pitch into every-day work—not necessarily the aimless cleaning of a garret—but work with some object in view.

One more suggestion—if I had no *practical* abilities in my make-up, but was gifted with a good hold on the English language, I would try to write something—anything. No matter if the long-suffering editors returned my manuscripts with regularity, I would go at it again with might and main and attempt to make real live creations of the dream-beings of a lonely life. And every one I would cause to live " happy ever after." The iron-clad rule laid down for the children of my brain would be that they must be happy, and I believe with psychologists that happiness would come a little nearer to the would-be creator of happy tales.

I have known so-called gentlewomen who are ashamed to work publicly for an income — who fear they may become *declassée*. I do not consider this an honorable shame. It is said that the daughters of our millionaires are taught some sort of profession — rarely if ever used, of course—but as a safeguard against possible misfortune. They are ready to work if need be.

To return to the nine million spinsters of America—are we happy, or can we be happy? THE MUNSEY editors, surfeited, perhaps, by the somewhat overworked plaint concerning the maternity withheld perforce from spinsters, asked that this question be considered from another standpoint.

THE FRUIT OF LONELINESS

Good sirs, I know no way of separating the subjects of the loss of wifehood and the loss of motherhood in a woman's life. It is an axiom that marriage that deliberately refuses parenthood is not true marriage. But I do believe, too, that the conjugal love and companionship of a husband and wife is just as necessary a blessing and development as the bearing and rearing of the children of that love. And such frenzied cries for maternity alone seem to me almost overdrawn. Families of the Rooseveltian-advocated size are rather impracticable in these days of difficult and complicated living. Loneliness is a dangerous perverter of judgment, and sometimes our ideas become entirely one-sided.

The arms of love clinging close about us—the deeply inexpressible sympathy—the new-born babes at our breasts—the laughter and delight—all these deepest, sweetest joys we may never know. But again; love, cold and dead; marital friction or hatred; the terror of big families, the wolf at the door while dependent ones clamor — these cruel, searing, dismaying, embittering pains, we will never know.

What is there for us? To be brave, good, cheery travelers on life's highway, to put our shoulders to the wheel somehow, in some way.

I am a firm believer in a God-directed life, and a conviction lies deep in my heart that no matter what we think about ourselves and our fortitude, perhaps we are better fitted to bear the burden of spinster-loneliness than we are to bear the more overwhelming burdens that ofttimes fall to the lot of the wife and mother. At least there is this to say: There is work in the vineyard for all, and the Master knows best what bit of ground we should cultivate, and on that ground we will stay, whether we be willing or unwilling servants.

THE BRIDEGROOM'S PRAYER

GOD, from Whom all blessings flow—
Thou Who didst grant my soul to know
This woman fair—
Show me the path on which to tread
Now and fore'er.
My heart, the treasure-house wherein
Is stored this virgin's love,
Stands now in dread.

Rash, foolish mortals all around me smile—
"On with the dance!"—not knowing, God, the while
That else than joy and pride
In having her
Hath made me silent as Christ's sepulcher
When after He, the Jew of Nazareth,
Was taken to the Cross and crucified. . . .
I am silent, near, as though myself in death!

God, grant me wisdom, courage, strength,
Fear of Thy wrath, that I may hope, at length,
To know for sure
That I, clay mortal, am full worthy of
This woman who in holy faith and trust
Hath blessed me with her sacred jewel, Love,
Untarnished by a taint of worldly lust—
Love that shall, through the Grace of Thee above,
Always endure.

Kent Brooklyn Stiles

BOB CORRIGAN'S FIGHT WITH A MEMORY

BY WILLIAM SLAVENS McNUTT

WITH A DRAWING (FRONTISPIECE) BY C. D. WILLIAMS

BELTING the Pacific Ocean, a hundred miles on each side of the equator, is a stretch of sea that sailors approach with much expression of profanity or prayer, according to their nature; for this belt is the realm of the "doldrums." North of it the northeast trade winds belly the sails to the delight of the sailorman's heart and the establishment of records for short passages; and south of it, the southeast trades are reasonably dependable; but within the limits of the doldrums, life is a misery to the ambitious mariner.

This belt is the insane asylum of the elements, where only idiotic and irresponsible winds abide, which either blow not at all, or blow furiously, from a dozen points of the compass, within the space of an hour. There vessels often lie becalmed for weeks at a time, only to be made the sport of short-lived squalls and varying winds, for another weary period. There the sailors are kept forever on the jump when the wind blows at all; making or taking in sail and trimming the yards to get every possible advantage of the slightest favoring breeze; working in the frequent downpours of rain, or stewing in the suffocating heat of the long, dead calm spells.

It was one of these periods of calm that caused Captain Bob Corrigan to curse, as the Chilean brig Anita, bound from Panama to Valparaiso with a cargo of hardwoods, rolled drearily on the smooth, sluggish swell, some six hundred miles to the westward of the Galapagos Islands.

Aft on the poop deck, beneath an awning, rigged under the main boom, Corrigan and Martin Hartman, his supercargo, lay sprawled out on canvas lazy chairs, enduring their misery as patiently as possible. The men of the afternoon watch were listlessly at work sizing off the lower rigging. One ordinary seaman, with a slush bucket and a bit of oakum, wiped the fresh tar from the rail while the A. B.'s worked on the lanyards.

The mate, leaning on the starboard bulwarks in the waist, straightened up and peered intently over the side.

"Looks like an old bottle floating out there sir," he reported to Corrigan. "It's all covered over with barnacles, but I believe it's a bottle."

Young Hartman jumped up and watched the floating object alongside with interest.

"Can't we get it?" he asked Corrigan eagerly. "Might be a tale of a shipwreck or something of that sort."

Corrigan laughed. "Always hunting for something to match up with the story books," he chided him. "Sure we'll get it. Put a boat out and pick it up, Mr. Diaz."

It was a bottle that the men brought on board, but so covered with barnacles that nothing of the glass or cork could be seen. Corrigan chipped away the shells, disclosing a quart whisky bottle. He smashed the neck off on the rail, and Hartman uttered an excited exclamation at sight of a spill of paper, curled in the broken flask.

"Likely some crazy sailor with more time than sense threw it overboard with a joke scribbled on it," Corrigan laughed, as he drew the roll out. "Don't bank too much on a shipwreck or a story of buried treasure, Martin."

The paper was yellowed and the writing blurred with mold. Corrigan unfolded it carefully and held it so that Martin, peering eagerly over his shoulder, could see. "I was picked up by the Costa Rican—" Martin deciphered the first line of the screed aloud, when Corrigan suddenly crushed it in his fist, snapping out an oath that made Hartman and the mate jump.

"What is it?" Hartman asked hesitantly.

Corrigan turned to him a face so white and distorted by passion that Hartman instinctively stepped back.

The captain's lips writhed in a silent effort to voice words that stress of emotion denied him.

"God!" he said at length, in a husky voice that issued from his strained throat, with the effect of a man retching. He turned on his heel and went below, walking unsteadily.

II

There lived on English Hill in Valparaiso at that time, a retired whaling skipper, originally from New Bedford, by the name of Ned McGuire. He had sailed for twenty-five years for the Chile Whaling Company, and retired after the death of his wife, to live his life ashore, with his twenty-eight year old daughter, Kathleen. She was a blond, blue eyed Irish girl, all curves and grace, but with the suggestion of underlying steel in her character.

Corrigan's infatuation for her was the talk of the West Coast. For five years, the big, hard Irishman, who had never been known to bow to man or woman, had knelt at her feet in supplication. There were tales in plenty of the women Corrigan had taken by force, or won to his careless love by his very indifference; but Kathleen McGuire he wooed tenderly, humbly, and unsuccessfully, while the world jeered—behind his back.

When Kathleen was twenty, she gave the promise of herself and her love to Jack Terrill, a young Yankee whaler in the employ of the Chile Whaling Company. She dreamed over the making of her wedding garments, while he was away on the trip, at the end of which the marriage was to take place. But there had been no known end to Terrill's last voyage. The ship, on which he had sailed, was first marked overdue and then,—missing. The dream of love in Kathleen's heart grew to a nightmare of agony, which changed again as the years went by, to a hopeless sense of irrevocable loss.

Three years after Terrill sailed away from Chile to be heard from no more, big Bob Corrigan met the girl and began his stubborn, humble suit. For five years, he wooed her and to no purpose; for the image of the man to whom she had promised herself was graven on her heart, and her love slumbered in a sleep that he alone could wake it from.

Twenty-two days after the bottle was picked up near the equator, the Anita dropped her anchor in Valparaiso Bay, and in the evening of that day, Corrigan rode the lift up the incline to English Hill.

Kathleen was lounging in a hammock on the veranda, when he turned in at the garden gate.

"Hello, Bob," she greeted him warmly. "I hadn't heard that you were in. Daddy's gone up to Lamache for a few days."

Corrigan took her proffered hand hungrily. "I'm glad of it," he said shortly. "I want to talk to you—alone."

The girl frowned. "If it's the same old thing, Bob, I'm sorry you came. I told you the last time that I—"

"I remember what you told me," Corrigan interrupted her. "I've sailed for four months with every word of it rotting the heart out of me like so much poison. It's not like I'd forget it now. Kathleen, I know what's become of Terrill."

The girl gasped and caught at one of the pillars for support. "Bob! Tell me, is he—is he—"

"I don't know whether he's dead or alive. I do know where I can find out."

The girl came close and clutched him by the lapels of his coat with her two slim hands. "Oh, Bob! Bob!"

The delicate, intoxicating fragrance of her hair maddened Corrigan's brain, and the sense of her soft warm body set the hot blood surging in his veins. He crushed her to him and kissed her hair, her eyes, her lips, murmuring incoherently. She lay quiet in his arms, as unresponsive as a statue of stone. Suddenly Corrigan freed her and she sank into the hammock. Corrigan's body ached from the pain of her passive repulsion of his passion, and the instinctive hate following unrequited emotion made his face hideous.

"I'd almost like to kill you," he muttered.

The girl opened her eyes. "Tell me," she repeated.

Corrigan shook his head. "No. I've

played square with you for five years, and treated you as I've treated no other woman in the world. I'm done. If I can't have you one way, I will another. I wanted you to love me; if you won't, I'll take you anyway. I'm the only person in the world who knows where Terrill is, if he's still alive, or who can find out for certain if he is dead. If he's still alive he's a prisoner and suffering the tortures of hell. Marry me and I'll free him or make certain if he is dead."

The girl shook her head.

"No, Bob"; she said gently. "If he is still alive, the greatest torture he could know would be to see me married to another man; and if he's dead, I won't buy my own peace of mind by selling what's his in life or death. But oh Bob, tell me!"

Corrigan studied her gloomily.

"I'd give my life any time to have you care for me that way for five minutes," he declared bitterly. "This man's been gone for eight years; what was there about him that's held you like this?"

"He never went out of my life, Bob, and he never came into it. He's just been a part of me ever since the dawn of time, I guess, and he always will be to the end of eternity. There isn't anything about him that holds me, Bob. Why, he's a part of me; he's just as much me, as what you see standing here; and if he's alive somewhere and suffering, it is I that's undergoing that punishment just as much as though the part of me that's here now were where he is."

Corrigan's jaws clenched until the muscles in his face stood in lumps and ridges.

"That's fool's talk. You think that because he was the first man you fell in love with. You remember the way you felt towards him then, and you think you still feel that way; but you don't. No you don't. I never knew him, but I'll lay a bet he's not the man I am. If he were here, I'd take my chances on winning you from him; but I can't fight with a memory. I'm going to get him and bring him to you.

"That's what I'm going to do. If he's still alive, I'll bring him here to you. But I want your promise of one thing: I want you to judge between us honestly when I get back. If you find that you still love this man as you think you do, I'll do what I've never done yet; I'll quit. But if you don't,—if you find that what I say is true, and that you're only in love with the way you felt about this fellow when you were twenty—I want you to admit it to yourself and give me a chance. Will you do it?"

"Yes, Bob. But I wish you wouldn't fool yourself with useless hope. I love him and,—Oh, Bob, Bob, bring him to me."

Corrigan whirled and started for the gate.

"I'm going to," he called over his shoulder grimly.

III

About five degrees north of the equator, in longitude 87 west, thrusting a densely forested head 1,200 feet up from the waters of the Pacific, lies an island that has stirred the hearts of bold adventurers and credulous fools since the palmy days of the Spanish Main. It is called Cocas Island, the grave of Captain Kidd's treasure, according to tradition. It has written a bloody page of history's book; for there, prior to 1878, the Costa Rican convicts were marooned, and men doomed to punishments that were worthy of the Arch Fiend's own brain.

The Anita, fourteen days out from Valparaiso, was less than one hundred miles west sou'west from Cocas, bowling along with all sail set and a ten knot trade wind abaft the beam, heeling her over a good four strakes, when Bob Corrigan came on deck and called the entire crew aft. The men came eagerly, for the Anita had cleared for Panama and then steered a course for Cocas Island; and their curiosity as to their destination and the purpose of the trip was rife.

"Men, the most of you have sailed with me before, and you all know me," Corrigan addressed them crisply. "You all know that when I go on a job that's not all regular, my crew gets a bonus that's worth the spending. We put in at Chatham Bay on Cocas Island this trip, and there may be a smart bit of a row before we leave. To every man who wants to ante his life in a little game, I'll give a hundred dollars bonus. Are you with me?"

The cheer that went up from the men brought a little flush of pride to Corrigan's cheek.

"Serve every man who wants to play in

this, a rifle and ammunition, Mr. Diaz," he instructed his mate. " And a shot of grog for all hands."

He turned to Hartman and beckoned him to follow into the cabin.

" We're liable to be let in for a very pretty fight before we're safely out of the box I'm going to build for us, Martin," he told him. " You're not one of us and I don't want to put your neck in a noose. You stay aboard the ship when we reach Chatham Bay; and before I touch off the powder I'll make it clear to the governor that you are only a passenger and not responsible for what occurs."

Young Hartman's face went white and his hands shook perceptibly, but his lips straightened into a determined line, and his eyes shone bright with the prospect of adventure.

" I don't know what you're going to do, and my cowardly legs will probably run away with me if I get into danger"; he said; " but if you'll put up with me, I'd like to stay with you in whatever you do."

Corrigan laughed. " You're a fool, but I like you," he declared. " Come ahead, my son. If they get you in the fracas, your troubles are over; and if they don't, you'll have a pretty fight to remember when time sits heavy on your shoulders. But don't get caught alive, boy. If you can't get away, die fighting. They call me a hard man, but my liquor gets uneasy in my stomach when I think of some of the things I've seen done to prisoners on this island."

Hartman caught his breath quickly, but nodded and straightened his narrow shoulders stanchly.

" I don't know how I'll act when I'm put to the test," he confessed. " But I'm going to find out. What are you going to do, captain?"

Passion painted evil on Corrigan's face with a quick stroke.

" I'm going to save a man I'd rather see dead than any one I ever hated," he snarled uglily. " If he's still alive, I'm going to save him and then make him wish he was dead; I'm going to free him from the worst prison on the face of the globe; I'm going to take him back to the girl who's waited for him for eight years, and then I'm going to take her away from him and make him ache like I've ached for five years; I'm going to make him hate me like I hate him, damn him!"

He jerked open the table in his cabin drawer and drew out a crumpled sheet of yellowed paper.

" It floated around the seas in that bottle for over seven years," he gloated. " And out of all the men in the world, I found it. He wanted to make a quick fortune for her, and he ran a cargo of arms in his whaling ship up to the rebels in Costa Rica. A government gun-boat caught him, and he's been a prisoner on Cocas ever since. He set this bottle afloat the first year he was there, and I found it!"

The big Irishman laughed savagely and ripped the paper into bits.

" He's been chained to a tree in the open ever since they took him there," he said with vindictive satisfaction. " Oh, I'll take him back! I'll show her what she thinks she loves! A grayhaired, shrunken old wreck of a man that a dog would growl at the sight of. A filthy, broken, gibbering fool, that would make a strong man gag to look at; a two-legged, rotted animal that the beggars in Valparaiso wouldn't sit in the dust with! She'll coddle a thing like that and love it, will she? He's a part of her, is he? Then I'll show her a part of herself that she'll be glad to cut off and have buried! I've been fighting for five years against her memory of a handsome, black haired, straight up and down young devil, who lit the first fire in her blood; and now—damn him—I'm going to take back the hulk they've made of him and show it to her. That's what I'm going to do."

IV

The governor of the convict settlement at Chatham Bay on Cocas Island received Corrigan cordially. He was a fat, puffy eyed degenerate, serving a five year appointment, and he hungered for men fresh from the world to talk to him of the scandal of the coast, and keep him company in his drunken debauches.

There were three hundred and fifty convicts on the island, and one company of soldiers. The settlement was on a plateau just above the half moon of the beach. The prisoners lived in bamboo huts thatched with palm leaves; the governor's house and the barracks were built of 'dobe.

Corrigan gave a shortage of water as a pretense for his visit, and easily obtained leave for his men to come ashore. They came unarmed, and after taking the water on board, strolled about unmolested, visiting the little farms tilled by the prisoners.

Of the prisoners on the island, all but seven lived in the bamboo huts. The seven were political offenders. After the day's work, they were chained to trees some three hundred yards down the slope from the governor's house. Clothing they had none, and were not even furnished with any manner of bedding to protect them at night. Each one had dug a partial shelter under the roots of the algaroba trees to which they were chained, and there they clung to life during the hours they were not at labor, in a state of degradation passing the possibility of any animal. It was impossible to guess at the age of any of the seven. All had long, white hair and beards; all were shrunken, scaly of skin and filthy beyond description.

The governor took particular pride in these specimens of the settlement over which he ruled, and when the men came in from the day's work, he led Corrigan and Hartman down to view them, much as a dog fancier leads a friend to the kennels of his favorite pets.

" A murderer this one," he explained to his guests, stopping before the muddy dugout of the first one in the line. The fellow lay on his side, his gray head propped wearily on the palm of one claw-like hand; taking no notice whatever of the governor or his guests. Don Manuel touched him tentatively with the toe of his boot. " A desperate fellow," he went on proudly. " Killed eight women in Punta Arenas, and a lieutenant in the army. Ha! He was a fierce dog when he came to us, but he's tame now. Yes, yes. Quite tame, indeed."

He drew back his foot and quite calmly kicked the fellow heavily in the face. The recumbent man whined incoherently and cringed, with his head in his arms.

" Perfectly tame," Don Manuel explained. " He would fight an army barehanded when he came, three years ago, and now I would not fear to turn him loose in my own house. Well broken."

He stopped again before the third man, chortling with delight. " One of your own countrymen, Señor Corrigan," he said. " Look at him well. I will tell you something of him."

The chained man was the pitiful wreck of a giant. His large hands hung from his skinny arms, that had once been full fleshed and thewed, like deformities; his large nose had been crushed and twisted by a blow; his hair and beard were white and long, and the shriveled skin clung to his protuberant ribs so closely that he was startlingly like unto a naked skeleton. His brown eyes were dim and full of a pathetic, childish idiocy. He sat cross-legged on the ground, staring out over the bay with one great, bony relic of a hand shading his eyes.

He looked up at the governor with a petulant expression, apparently oblivious of the other two men.

" They'll come, I tell you," he declared in a peevish, whining voice. " You may laugh and beat me, but they will come."

" He got away once," the governor said, laughing. " Shortly after he was brought here, he escaped from one of the guards while being brought back from his work in the fields, and ever since, he has sat thus when he was not working, staring out over the bay and assuring us that ' they ' will come and deliver him. He fought wonderfully before he was finally recaptured. We were more than a week finding him, and when he was finally taken, his mind failed him. He was almost killed in the fight, and when he was at last brought back to life by our nursing, to be taught that it is not wise to offend the government, he was an imbecile as you see him.

" A ship passed near, during the time he was loose, and we think that he must have attempted to signal her; or perhaps he dropped some message into the sea. At any rate, he has sat thus ever since, declaring that ' they ' will come and ever staring thus over the bay. The delightful part of the comedy is, that were any one to come to his deliverance, as he expects, he would not know it. Many ships have come into the bay since he has been thus, and he does not see them; he stares on when they are here, as he does when the bay is empty; ever making his mad boast that ' they ' will come for him and that at that time, I shall pay the penalty for his unjust punishment. He attempted to run a cargo of arms to the revolutionists."

Hartman, physically sick from disgust, and outraged to the point of an outbreak, stole a side glance at Corrigan. What he saw made him gasp, and icy fingers of fear clutched his spine.

He was Corrigan's friend and had sailed

with the big Irishman several trips. He knew him as a splendid companion, an interesting storyteller and a sympathetic friend. The tales of the big man's desperate exploits in the South Seas, he had heard, and knew that many of them were true; but never before had he been able to achieve a real understanding of the ruthless, tigerlike cruelty that was dominant in one of the captain's nature. As he stared at him now, he understood; and understanding, cringed at the thought that he was at the mercy of such a man.

Corrigan was staring at the pitiful figure squatted on the ground, and grinning with malignant delight. There was no sympathy or horror in his look; it expressed nothing but savage joy and satisfaction.

He reached down, twitched the naked man's ear as he might pat a dog on exhibition, and laughed aloud.

"A good job, Don Manuel," he congratulated the governor, in a silky snarl of a voice. "And he's been a man in his day, eh?"

"A fire to light any woman, when he came," the governor assured him, chuckling with delight at having found a connoisseur in the pleasures of cruelty. "A fine, proud, black-haired dog of a man, with great brown eyes that might bewitch the soul of a goddess. And a proud, fighting man, *señor;* a fellow of spirit. But well tamed, eh? Like all the rest. No matter what the metal be, when it reaches us, we mold it from one cast, and they all come out the same."

Corrigan's eyes narrowed speculatively. "Some of these fellows might have friends on the outside," he said. "Haven't you ever had an attempted rescue?"

"A number of times," the governor admitted. "But never a successful one. Never have we lost a man alive from the island. We guard them well, Captain Corrigan, and we are ever on the alert. Sentries patrol at all hours, and a whistle from any of them brings the whole guard out armed, in the space of a moment. Three guards watch these men alone during the night hours, and no one is ever permitted ashore armed. Ah, no, *capitan.* No escape is possible for men here. We are never unprepared, in case, for example, that this man's insane boast should not prove idle, and 'they,' whoever they may be, should indeed come for him. 'They' would but join him or else escape in flight."

"Wise thing to do," Corrigan congratulated him. "But we are long without drinks, Don Manuel. Shall we—"

"A thousand pardons," the governor apologized. "I was so interested in showing you samples of our handiwork here, that I have forgotten my duties as a host. Come. We shall return to the house at once and make amends. But I have amused you, gentlemen? You have not been bored?"

Corrigan's fists clenched till the knuckles showed white through the skin, and his lips drew away from his teeth in a convulsive, snarling grin.

"I've looked at many things that pleased me," he said, "but that's the sweetest sight I ever saw."

The governor soon grew maudlin in an attempt to consume drink for drink with Corrigan. Hartman pleaded illness and retired to a couch to lie with closed eyes, desperately fighting off the terror that gripped him. He was more afraid of Corrigan than of the governor or his soldiers. The dread of the fight that was to come had left him utterly; but of Corrigan he was desperately afraid.

He had been friendly with him; he had talked with him on many subjects and knew him for a fairly well educated man, with a wide understanding of the world and its ways; a man who discussed the ethical ideas and religions of many peoples, with a great degree of native intelligence. And this man whom he had come to know as a friend, and regard as one who shaded, to some degree, all his own instincts of right and wrong and the sanctity of human life, had looked on the Chained Tragedy under the algaroba tree and laughed with joy!

He had known that Corrigan was a desperate fighter—a killer. But he always thought that the man was a hero only in battle; an indomitable fighter who was cruel only under stress. And now that he knew the man for what he was, he was horribly afraid of him. Suppose that he should offend in some way? Would he be accorded any more mercy than the wreck on whom Corrigan had looked that afternoon—and laughed?

It grew dark while Corrigan and Don Manuel continued their carouse, and Martin lay on the couch in a tremble of horror. To him at length Corrigan came and whispered: "All set. You'll find Diaz waiting at the landing with a boat. He'll have two revolvers apiece for us. Bring them back here with you and tell Diaz to bring the men ashore and whistle when they're landed. There's a good off-shore breeze setting in, and we'll have our man and be at sea before the moon rises."

When Martin returned from the landing, the governor was beyond recognition of him. He was slumped deep in his chair, muttering maudlin nothings and practically oblivious of all that went on about him. Corrigan on the other hand, was alert, very slightly flushed of cheek, and bright of eye, but absolute master of himself.

" We'll slip away down the hill towards where this fellow's tied up, as soon as Diaz whistles," he explained to Martin, after slipping two of the four revolvers into the waist-band of his trousers. " We'll lie quiet in the tall grass there, until the men are discovered, and then grab this fellow in the excitement when the shooting first starts and get him aboard before they have time to pull their wits together."

It seemed to Martin that they had lain silent in the shelter of the grass for hours, listening to the tread of the three sentries, pacing up and down before the dugouts of the chained men before they heard the expected whistle from the mate.

The whistle was followed by a five minute silence that was torture to Martin's strained nerves, and then a sharply shouted challenge. An oath, a shot and a yell came in quick succession, and Corrigan leaped to his feet.

" Come on," he whispered to Martin, and went bounding away down the hill towards the seven algaroba trees.

Martin blundered after him, his senses whizzing, and a sensation of frightful sickness at the pit of his stomach. In front of him a voice cried out sharply, and he glimpsed the terrified face of one of the sentries, in the brief flash of Corrigan's gun. A shriek of anguish followed the roar of the gun, and Martin's knees weakened and bent beneath him. He tried to scream a moment later, when a pair of arms reached out of the dark and clutched at his knees; but fear had locked his throat and he rolled on the ground in the embrace of a foe, fighting silently.

A stunning blow landed on his temple, and for a moment consciousness left him. When it returned, he was atop of his man and hammering his unseen face savagely. All sense of fear had left him and he realized that he was remarkably cool and alert. The thought of possible injury to himself had vanished with the impact of the blow on his head, and he fought calmly, with a wonderful sense of content.

A fierce thrill of joy shot through him when he felt the body under him relax from the shock of a well placed blow. He reached for one of his guns, grasped it by the muzzle and struck where he felt the man's head to be. The heavy butt thudded home, and the man's weakening grasp on Martin's arm loosed altogether. Martin rose, panting, but cool, and laughed softly.

He stood crouched, peering about him into the gloom, searching the night with every sense for news of the conflict, eager to be in the midst of it. The realization that he was not afraid; that he hungered to get into the thick of the fray and fight, intoxicated him like the first fumes of powerful liquor. He heard Corrigan call and ran towards him. He found him bending over the body of the man they had come to get, fumbling with the lock of the chain that held him.

" Can I help you?" Martin panted eagerly. He heard Corrigan laugh and felt the caress of the big Irishman's hand on his thigh.

" How do you like it?" Corrigan inquired.

" Fine," Martin answered him. " Can you get it loose?"

" I'll have it in a minute. I shattered the lock with a bullet and I've got it nearly twisted off. Scared?"

" No."

" Just like eating or sleeping, when you get started once. Ah! I got it that time. I'll pack him on my shoulder, and we'll make a run for the boats."

The whole hillside was spotted with yellow flashes. The curses, groans and yells of the fighting men made the night hideous. The big alarm bell atop the barracks tolled wildly. Followed by Martin, Corrigan leaped away down the hill towards the beach, carrying Terrill on his shoulder. A hundred yards from the landing, Corrigan shouted a warning to Martin and fired into a group ahead of him. A moment later, Martin found himself in the midst of fighting, shooting men. A gun flashed in his face and he felt the sear of the bullet along his cheek. He fired at the flash and the shadow behind it, that was a man, disappeared. He dropped to one knee, firing joyously on every side of him.

He shouted an answer to Corrigan's hail to follow on, and started on the run again. A familiar voice shrieking orders in the darkness off to his left attracted his attention, and he stopped still, listening. It was the voice of the governor, and suddenly every sense but that of rage left Martin and he veered off to the left in the direction from which the voice came.

He heard Corrigan call to him anxiously, and laughed softly. A moment later he was on top of Don Manuel. The governor shrieked as the two crashed to the ground together, rolling over and over. The picture of the fat man's evil glee, as he kicked the defenseless prisoner, was clear in Martin's mind, and he slammed his fists into the man's flesh with savage satisfaction. He heard the sound of running feet and men calling and knew that soldiers were coming to the governor's assistance.

Unmindful of the approaching peril, he hung to his man, tearing with his fingers, striking, biting, fighting like a wild animal. He felt a sudden sharp twinge in his side, and reaching down, grasped the blade of a dagger that sliced the palm of his hand. He screamed, cursed once, and wrenching himself free, snatched his gun from his belt and fired full into the prone man's face. A fist smote him back and he dropped to the ground to be instantly smothered under an avalanche of writhing bodies.

He was being beaten and twisted into insensibility and expecting every instant to feel the bite of steel or the crash of a bullet in his vitals, when above the yelling he heard the welcome roar of Corrigan's voice near by. A warm rush of affection tingled through him, and suddenly he liked the big Irishman as he never had before. He felt the bodies of the men torn away from him, and a moment later he was caught up in Corrigan's arms.

"Hurt?" Corrigan panted, as he ran with him.

Martin laughed and slapped the big fellow's face fondly. "No," he said scornfully. "Let me down; I can keep up."

The roar of a cannon sounded as Corrigan and Martin toppled into one of the waiting boats.

"We're going to have to make sail in a hurry," Corrigan said as the crew pulled frantically towards the ship. "It'll be only luck, if they do us any damage. They can't see to shoot before the moon's up, and we'll be far and away by then."

A few round shot whined through the rigging while the crew frantically worked at setting the topsails, topgallantsails and royals. The carpenter knocked the pin out of the thirty fathom shackle of the anchor chain and let it run through the hawse pipe. The jibs were set. She paid off slowly, the foreyards were braced round and she filled away on the port tack with the stiff land breeze heeling her well over.

Terrill had passed through all the excitement in a state of idiotic daze. He stood in the waist, naked as he was brought aboard, when the ship stood out to sea, gazing about him dully.

"Take him into the fo'c'stle and stick him into a berth with some blankets," Corrigan instructed the mate, and went below to his cabin to see Martin, who had gone before to dress his wounds.

"Much hurt?" Corrigan inquired tersely.

"Little slit in the side and the scratch of a bullet on my cheek here." Martin answered the question as laconically as it had been asked. "Bruised up a little here and there, but nothing bad."

Corrigan grinned slowly. "You little *fiste* pup!" he chided him. "And you were the one that was worried for fear you'd run when the row started. The only running you did was into the middle of it all. You get a little blood on your teeth and you never do want to quit."

Martin stopped bandaging his face and looked at Corrigan earnestly. "I think I killed Don Manuel," he said, half to himself.

"Good job," Corrigan praised unconcernedly. "Filthy beast."

"I meant to, anyhow," Martin went on. "I did. I never felt like that before."

"Sure not. You never got into that kind of a box."

Martin took a long breath and nodded. "I believe it," he said decisively. "I never was in that kind of a box before, that's just it. And because I never was, I never imagined that I could feel like that."

He regarded Corrigan intently for a moment and then held out his hand. "I hated you this afternoon captain," he said frankly. "I hated you, and I don't know why I shouldn't now; but I don't. I like you and I always will, no matter what you do. I don't know why, but I do."

There was a little note of embarrassment in Corrigan's laughter. "Oh, men get that way, fighting together," he said carelessly.

Martin nodded. "I guess that's it," he agreed. "I never knew much about fighting before."

Corrigan was nervous after Martin's exhibition of sentiment. "I'm going on deck," he said, after fidgeting for a moment. "If you need anything why—"

"I'm all fixed, thanks."

Corrigan went out and Martin sat in his chair with an expression of surprise on his face, staring at nothing. He was still filled with that sense of warm *camaraderie* and liking for the man whom he knew to be cruel almost beyond belief. And with the feeling of warm friendship was a sense of implicit trust.

He shook himself like a man waking suddenly from a doze, and passed his hands over his eyes.

"I—I guess I never knew much about anything before," he concluded.

V

THE Anita lay at anchor in Valparaiso Bay. It was shortly after first dark, and Martin lounged on the poop-deck, watching the high piled lights on the hill back of the city. A splash of oars in the water alongside attracted his attention, and he walked to the rail to see Corrigan ascending the Jacob's ladder. The big Irishman swung over the bulwarks and staggered as he dropped to the deck. He clutched Martin's arm and clung to him heavily.

"Take me below," he said thickly. "There's something wrong with me, I think— I don't know what. Take me below."

Wondering and fearful, Martin led him to his cabin and the big Irishman sank into his chair and buried his face in his arms, crossed on the table.

"I took him up to her as you saw him leave the ship with me," he said after a moment, in an awed voice, looking up at Hartman. "Dressed in that old jersey and dungarees. She kissed him on the lips and took his head on her breast. She did. And his reason came back to him when she kissed him. I tell you she kissed him back to life and reason. She kissed him! That withered old— My God! She kissed him!"

And suddenly a strange thing happened.

Corrigan's great body quivered as with a chill, and a dry sob that jarred and wrenched every fiber of him, retched its way to his throat and found voice in a moaning cry. He dropped his head in his hands again, and writhed with an agony that could not ease itself with tears. When he rose and made his way to his berth, he was tottering and Martin helped him in.

"Don't go away just yet," the big fellow begged in an almost childish voice. "Don't! I don't understand this, Martin. I can't understand it and—and I think I'm almost—afraid."

He picked at the bedclothing nervously, with shaking fingers, and droned on in an awed voice: "I might as well have brought her back the man who went away eight years ago; she couldn't have been any more glad to see him. She loves this as she loved that. I don't— She brought him back to his senses, Martin. I left them in each other's arms there on the porch and came—"

He raised himself on his elbow and clutched Martin by the arm. "And, Martin, I'm glad of it," he declared in a scared, shaky voice. "I'm glad of it. Why, I've hated him worse than any man who ever lived; I've wanted that girl till— And now I'm glad of this. I— Martin, I never was scared before in all my life, but I am now. I don't know myself. I'm glad, I tell you!"

"You never got into that kind of a box," Hartman repeated Corrigan's words, uttered after the fight on the island. "That's why. You're in love with that woman, Corrigan, and you never were in love before. It—it hits hard, doesn't it? I left mine in Boston and—I know."

Corrigan gripped his hand. "I — it does," he whispered. "I never knew much about—that kind of thing before. And the funny part is that I'm—I'm glad."

He turned his face away and hunched in the blankets. "I guess I'd better wrastle this out alone," he said with an assumption of gruffness. "Good night."

And wondering mightily, Hartman went on deck and stared into the brilliantly star sprinkled sky from awe-widened eyes.

NEW YORK STREET PARADE OF SUFFRAGE ADVOCATES

From a photograph by Paul Thompson, New York

SOCIETY IN SUFFRAGE

BY CORINNE LOWE

IN the past five years suffrage has been creeping steadily upon the ranks of society. From Boston to New Orleans and from New York to San Francisco, through the conservatism of Philadelphia and over the prickly opinion of a Southern city like Washington, the cause of equal franchise has arrived at the very threshold of our American aristocracy.

Even yet, of course, society is divided on the suffrage topic. To the Roland of Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, for instance, we have the Oliver of that widely known "anti," Mrs. Francis Scott. Yet when we consider that only a few years ago a vast gulf stretched between the pages of the Social Register and those of the suffrage roll-call, that only in 1908 did we first shake off the tradition that Alpine hats, queer garments and suffrage convictions were about equally compounded in the unpalatable dose of "strong-mindedness," the advance of the movement seems absolutely phenomenal.

There can be no doubt, either, that the names of prominent society women in the roster have furnished a very impressive argument for suffrage. For the sway of fashion extends from the spindly feather on our hats to the sturdy cause which affects the welfare of the nation, and it is undoubtedly due to the sympathy of the pioneer suffragists in New York society that suffrage is now what one of our contemporary authors declares "a fashionable thing."

Look over all the smaller cities and the large towns of America and you are sure to behold this guiding influence of society names in New York, Chicago and Wash-

MRS. O. H. P. BELMONT, WHO IS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE POLITICAL EQUALITY LEAGUE

From a copyrighted photograph by Aimé Dupont, New York

ington. Here you will invariably find heading suffrage organizations women who might never have been impressed by the ethical appeal of suffrage had not such eminent figures as Mrs. Clarence Mackay, Mrs. Willis T. McCrea and Mrs. Gifford Pinchot been blazoned as its supporters. Society has, in fact, managed to take the sting of ridicule from the cause championed by Susan B. Anthony and William Lloyd Garrison, and from its activities we catch a reflex action all over the United States.

The first pebble of suffrage was thrown into New York's social waters in the year 1908 when, quite independently of each other, Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont and Mrs. Clarence Mackay both came out for the cause. Each of them founded an organization, and to this day it is an unsettled question as to which deserves the rank of pioneer suffragist in the guarded ranks of New York society.

As their championship has taken, however, such divergent paths there can really be here no question of rivalry. The fact of it is that while Mrs. Belmont has been more interested in the general propagation of suffrage arguments, Mrs. Mackay has occupied the position of apostle to her own class, and to-day the Equal Franchise Society which she started six years ago is perhaps the most fashionable of the various suffrage organizations in New York.

On its membership rolls may be found such prominent names as Mrs. George Gould, Mrs. Charles Dana Gibson, Mrs. Robert Goelet, Mrs. Bourke Cockran, Mrs. Inez Milholland Boissevain, Mrs. Egerton Winthrop, Jr., Mrs. John Jacob Astor, Mrs. John Corbin, Miss Caroline Duer, Mrs. Philip Lydig—ah yes, after

MRS. PHILIP LYDIG

From a photograph by Campbell, New York

MRS. AMOS R. PINCHOT

From a photograph by Davis & Sanford, New York

glancing over this list there can be no doubt that the suffrage kite is ascending with a fine appendix of society names!

But, although Mrs. Mackay did so much towards popularizing the movement among her own set, the society woman of whom America invariably thinks in connection with suffrage is Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont. Ever since she came out for suffrage in 1908 she has been constantly identified with its aims. She is at all suffrage conventions one of the most prominent figures and she has undoubtedly given more liberally to suffrage funds than any other woman in the country. When, for instance, the headquarters of the National and New York State Associations were removed to New York City she contributed the funds towards maintaining them for two years—a sum supposed to lie between eighty and one hundred thousand dollars.

Ask Mrs. Belmont just what it is which makes her a suffragist, and she will answer, "The unfair economic position of women." The belief that women have not had a square deal is, in fact, at the very core of her activity. Working-women in particular inspire her interest and sympathy and her position towards labor was well defined by the assistance she rendered the shirtwaist-makers during their strike of 1911.

Mrs. Belmont's own pet suffrage organization is the Political Equality League, and logically enough it is intended primarily to convert the working-woman to the cause which Mrs. Belmont so earnestly believes will strengthen her position. Towards this end she maintains a lunch-room which is crowded every day with women who appreciate the advantages of a roast-beef sandwich and a bit of rice-pudding at purely nominal cost. Incidentally, suffrage pamphlets are distributed and ultimately Mrs. Belmont believes that all the patrons will be "taking a little suffrage on the side."

Undoubtedly the efforts of these pioneer suffragists in New York society were greeted with the conventional skepticism. "A mere mood," shrugged many of their own

MRS. GEORGE J. GOULD

From a photograph by Campbell, New York set, and it is easy to fancy the strong expression of distaste with which Mr. Alonzo Brown of Green Rivers, Indiana, read the first account of society-suffrage doings.

"Well," we can hear him say to his wife over the evening paper, "I see the four hundred are at suffrage now. Guess they're tired of million dollar yachts and tea-parties at Newport."

If you had been inclined to share that cynical view, you would have thought better of it on approaching last fall a street meeting down near Washington Square. Happening to saunter along at that moment you would have been attracted by a clear, earnest voice and by the face of the young woman looking down over that casual group of business men,

MRS. NORMAN DE R. WHITEHOUSE

From a photograph by Curtis Bell

young rowdies and little shop girls. Above all, you would have been held by the animation and courage in those brown or are they dark-blue eyes under the cloud of dark hair.

The speaker of this meeting was Mrs. Norman de R. Whitehouse, known to-day as perhaps the most industrious and effective suffrage worker in New York society. Mrs. Whitehouse is not one of those suffragists content with merely signing her name to a piece of paper. On the contrary, hers is a leading rôle in the Women's Political Union with which branch of the New York City suffrage organization she has for some time been allied.

Here, as chairman of the Seventeenth Senatorial Committee, she presides over numerous meetings. She was conspicuous in arranging the last "Votes for Women Ball" and when last fall Sir Almoth E. Wright's book, "The Unexpurgated Case against Suffrage," appeared, her newspaper reply was notable for the vigor and lucidity with which she combated the great English nerve-specialist's arguments.

MRS. CHARLES DANA GIBSON

From a photograph by Aimé Dupont, New York

MRS. J. BORDEN HARRIMAN

From a photograph by Davis & Sanford, New York

Above all, Mrs. Whitehouse has addressed street-meetings—many of them,—and this she will tell you is the very most acid test to which you can submit the courage of a suffragist. In view, too, of the fact that Mrs. Whitehouse is a Southern woman—she was Miss Vera Boarman of New Orleans—brought up within the dikes of tradition thrown about Southern womanhood, her emergence from the test is the more triumphant.

In spite of her prominence in the suffrage movement Mrs. Whitehouse finds time for the society occasions to which she is such an ornament. Look over the page of "Social Festivities" and you will find her among those present. Only last January she made a visit in the home of Ambassador Gerard of Germany, when of course she was presented at court. Truly a piquant experience it must have been, too, when this doughty little chairman of the Seventeenth Senatorial District Committee came face to face with the emperor whose lofty view concerning the position of woman has become a matter of history.

Another dynamo in suffrage is Mrs. John Winters Brannan who has been conspicuously associated with both the Equal Franchise Society and the Women's Political Union. The history of Mrs. Brannan's conversion is a most interesting one.

When in 1908 Mrs. Cady Stanton Blatch, the head of the Women's Political Union succeeded in bringing to this country Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, Mrs. Brannan probably shared the indignation felt by so many women of her set. It was about this time, in fact, that Mrs. Brannan is said to have reduced a young English-American suffragist to the freezing point by the icy question, "And I suppose you have been in jail" leveled at her on the moment of introduction.

When Mrs. Brannan heard Mrs. Pankhurst speak, however, she was swept away by the eloquence of this sad-faced, gentle-voiced English militant. She became a great friend of Mrs. Pankhurst and later even sent her daughter to England to study the methods employed by the British leaders. To-day Mrs. Brannan is known as having marched in all the New York suffrage parades, and as one of the most active workers in, and contributors to, the cause.

Nowadays if you happen to stroll into the St. Regis hotel on any of the Mondays when the Seventeenth Senatorial District Committee of the Women's Political Union is holding a meeting, your sympathy will go out to the poor cartooner. Where are the dowdy frocks, the Alpine hats, the "strong-minded" types that used to inspire that merry pencil of his? Certainly not here. Shut your ears, in fact, and you will believe that you are looking at a group devoted to no more serious discussion than that of the newest tango variation or the latest society tableaux.

Here, for instance, you find among the hostesses, Mrs. Henry Wise Miller, better known to the world by her pen name of Alice Duer Miller under which are to be found thoughtful stories in many of our magazines; Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, the only woman member of the Board of Industrial Relations; Mrs. Walter Maynard, who as member of both the Equal Franchise and the Women's Political Union, has walked in several of the street parades; and the charming Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt Jr., news of whose conversion has filled the suffrage camp with rejoicing.

Coaxed out of a mere perfunctory acquiescence by the activity of Mrs. Blatch's organization, the society woman of the Political Union really works. She attends meetings and follows closely the political and industrial movements of the day. She sometimes makes street speeches. She helps to organize the various pageants and publicity features. At the very least you will hear of her addressing envelopes, for it must be remembered that much of the clerical work of the suffrage societies is assumed by volunteers. And always you will find her straining her eyes towards the contest of 1915.

THE CAUSE IN CHICAGO

Under the white heat of suffrage campaigns the society woman often acquires a deft political sense that puts to rout the average man. Take for instance Mrs. Medill McCormick of Chicago, now a figure of international importance in the movement for equal franchise. Hearing and seeing this animated little woman in the plain tailored blue suit during the last national convention at Washington, one's involuntary comment was "What a politician!" and upon asking who she was one felt no surprise at the answer, "Why, that's the daughter of the late Senator Mark A. Hanna."

Mrs. Medill McCormick is a young woman, but she has done so much both in and out of suffrage that one is tempted to ramble on about her for a page or more. Sketched in briefly, this is her career. She is worth five million dollars in her own name. During the Roosevelt administrations she was a prominent figure in Washington society and was a great friend of Mrs. Nicholas Longworth, then Miss Alice Roosevelt. She has always been much interested in politics and for some years has been an active suffragist. She was one of the four women on the lobby commission which secured the recent victory in Illinois. And she is now chairman of the Congressional Committee of the National American Suffrage Association.

This well-padded title means, too, almost as much as it sounds. It signifies that Mrs. McCormick represents the forty-two States in bringing pressure upon Congress for the suffrage amendment to the Constitution. It signifies that she must work constantly and must send out endless reports upon her progress. Last of all, it necessitates the maintenance of offices in Washington. As an indication of the lever applied to the cause by women of independent means, we may mention that these same offices are rented and equipped at Mrs. McCormick's own expense.

Mrs. Medill McCormick represents, too, only one of the many progressive suffragists recruited from Chicago society. Although, indeed, the movement here received its fashionable indorsement later than in New York, the city of Jane Addams has well atoned for its tardiness, and to-day many of the most fashionable and wealthy women of Illinois are numbered in the suffrage ranks.

It is Mrs. Willis McCrea, the wealthiest woman of Chicago, to whom belongs the distinction of having held the first " fashionable " suffrage meeting in the Middle West. This occurred about three years ago at the summer home of Mrs. McCrea at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

The next great society meeting was held the following winter at the home of Mrs. Hobart Chatfield-Chatfield Taylor, one of the most beautiful and accomplished of Chicago hostesses. Invitations to this were sent out and one dollar admission was charged. The speakers of the occasion were Mrs. Stanley McCormick of Boston and Chicago and Mrs. Alice Duer Miller of New York. This meeting was an enormous success. Dollars piled to Alpine heights and, as one visitor expressed it, " you could hardly run people out of the house."

Although this event occurred at the home of Mrs. Taylor, it was in reality at the invitation of Mrs. Joseph T. Bowen, the famous philanthropist. In later years Mrs. Bowen has neglected the claims of society for the social work in which she has been so much interested. She has given large sums to the building of Hull House, has been closely identified with Miss Jane Addams, and like this great social worker, was until a few years ago merely a passive suffragist. Not, indeed, until she came to believe that the reforms upon which she has set her heart could be accomplished only with the aid of woman suffrage, did her passivity kindle into real enthusiasm. To-day she is perhaps the most eminent of Chicago society women in the cause.

Nor must we forget another important occasion. This was a meeting at the home of Mrs. Cyrus McCormick, well-known in Chicago for her conservative attitude. She threw open her Italian Renaissance ballroom, and for hours the long mirrors, set in their background of murky oak, reflected back low-cut satin gowns, flashing jewels and the black and white of men's evening clothes. At this brilliant affair many of the fashionable guests — both women and men—" signed up " for suffrage, and here the curtain may properly go down upon the report of the movement in Chicago society.

IN WASHINGTON AND BOSTON

Other cities, although not able to show such a glittering array of society suffragists as do New York and Chicago, still do much to support the theory that suffrage is becoming a fashionable belief. At the time of the great suffrage parade in Washington, for instance, the number of widely known society women in the national capital in line was a revelation to those who had not yet recognized the inroads made by suffrage upon conservative minds.

" Why," exclaimed one of the spectators as this impressive segment of the last inaugural parade went by, " if there isn't Mrs. Barett Ridgeley!"

" And Mrs. Warner Bailey, too," whispered another. " Now isn't she just the last person in the world you would expect to see doing this?"

That is the final triumphant comment of the suffragists—they are now interesting the " last people in the world you would expect to see doing it." Mrs. Ridgeley who, as Miss Kate Deering, was a brilliant figure through various administrations and who now, as the wife of a former Comptroller of the Treasury is recognized as one of Washington's most charming hostesses and Mrs. Warner Bailey, wife of a rear admiral in the navy—these are women who have always held daintily aloof from " radicalism," and for this reason their accession to suffrage is the more convincing to their timid sisters.

Other Washington society women who have heartily indorsed suffrage are Mrs. Gifford Pinchot, better known as Madame Pinchot, and mother-in-law of Mrs. Amos Pinchot of New York, also a recognized suffragist; Mrs. Christian Hemmick who, under her former name of Mrs. Barney, is known, not only as a wealthy and appreciative patron of art, but as a painter of much distinction; Mrs. John Timmons, daughter of former ex-President Fairbanks and wife of the naval aide of President Taft, and Mrs. Albert Coke Burleson who was the dashing marshal of the Washington parade. Mrs. Burleson, by the way, has recently " given up society " to study social problems in the University of Washington.

Boston has failed to show the revolutionary spirit animating it when they did that little thing to the tea in Boston harbor. Nevertheless suffragists will tell you that they are content when they can point to such representative names as those of Mrs. Wirt Dexter and her daughter, Mrs. Stanley McCormick. Mrs. McCormick is, by the way, treasurer of the National Suffrage Association, and is furthermore one of the most convincing speakers in the movement.

The traditional " place of women " has not yet been very successfully displaced in the South. At the same time the other side of Mason and Dixon line has given suffrage some such established names as those of the Misses Jean and Kate Gordon, of New Orleans, regular attendants of the suffrage conventions, and of Mrs. Desha Breckenridge of Louisville, Kentucky, possessor of a marvelous gift of speaking undoubtedly inherited from her ancestor, Henry Clay.

TO LOUISE

Forget thee? I? When it was joy to hear
  The least regarded word that, passing by,
Fell from thy lips; whose day was filled with cheer
  At thy most careless glance; forget thee? I?
Who deemed because of thee 'twas more worth while
  Just to have lived; who prized beyond recall
His meager portion in thy general smile,
  A less than nothing that was more than all;
There is no thought of thee that I regret,
There is no loss; I ask not to forget.

Forget thee? I? Because it could not be?
  Because I might not claim a greater share?
Better a cool, frank, friendly hand from thee
  Than love and lips from any maid less fair.
No dream of thee was ever dreamt in vain,
  No heaven was entered 'neath so light a cross,
For I have counted this eternal gain
  That others would have called immediate loss;
What thou hast done still leaves me in thy debt,
What could not be—that only I forget.

So, without one small doubt, one single care,
  My last request of Heaven is humbly made.
Sooner or later every earnest prayer
  Is answered, though the time be long delayed.
I do not beg for what thou canst not give,
  For what was never mine I do not pray;
I only ask: God, let the memory live
  Of thee, dear love, when life has passed away.
See! How the dawn breaks as the last star sets,
There is no end; unless my soul forgets.

Harry F. Bowling

"FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILD"

BY HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE

Here we have a discussion of the divorce question from a new angle. It is well-nigh universally urged that "for the sake of the children" couples having children should not resort to the divorce courts, however great their differences.

Miss Hawthorne takes issue with this conventional theory, contending that it does not fit all cases, and presents a vivid picture to sustain her conclusions. Inferentially she argues for divorce for the sake of the children—a startling position you will say, and then, may it not be, you will agree with her when you have read her article.

Since divorce has come to play so important a part with us in these days, MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE invites a further discussion of the problem, and it is a great human problem of many sides. That Miss Hawthorne has said in this article what many people have had it in their hearts to say and no one has dared to say, is certain. The picture she presents is a replica of many "homes" where the soul has gone out of marriage, leaving it an empty shell, a thing kept up for the sake of appearances or for the sake of the children or for both.—*The Editor.*

THERE is one side of the divorce question that has never been put into words by the only one whom it affects. Others, who cannot possibly know what they are talking about, have had plenty to say, to be sure. But it's always the same thing. For however differently people think on that subject, whether they approve or disapprove, whether they pity or whether they condemn the unhappy couple who have discovered that their marriage was a mistake, they are sure to agree on one point.

"If there is a child they ought to stay together for its sake," they say.

All the while the child says nothing. How can it? Who would listen? How should it find words if it did get a hearing? Yet the child's opinion, the child's experience, is surely the only one of value.

Well, I am that child. I am one, at least, of the many, for whose sake two people who should have lived apart have lived together. And I want to tell you my story, mine and that of my brother and sister. After you have read it, perhaps you will not be so sure as you have been that divorce ought not to be allowed "for the sake of the child."

I am the oldest of the three of us. Next comes my brother; then, two years younger than he, my sister Emma. There is only a year between Harry and me, and we have always been close chums. I think we both feel much older than Emmy, who is not very robust, and small for her years. She is sixteen now, fair, slender, sensitive. We are all of us that, however. Too sensitive, I'm afraid.

I don't remember just how young I was when I began feeling unhappy and ill at ease whenever I was alone with both my father and mother. But it must have been while I was still a very little thing. Neither could I describe precisely how I was unhappy. I wasn't afraid in a sense; but I was conscious of something distressful, something I did not in the least understand. I dreaded a silence—I think that was my most decided feeling.

Silences have always been terrible to me. They seemed to be leading to some peril. Yet later I have come to dread speech more. To turn sick at hearing the tone of my mother's voice in addressing a question or a remark to my father; to wait, trembling, for his response, in that cold, weary tone whose every intonation I knew so well. The tone he used toward mother.

Another early impression that comes to me is the conception I had of both father and mother as being each two people. There was mother-alone, as I called her, alone with us children, that is, a mother full of affection, sometimes even gay and playful, ready to listen to our endless chatter, ready to tell us stories, interested in everything we did, teaching us, petting us, making us laugh.

And there was father-alone. He too was a creature at ease and content when we trotted about with him over the garden, still pouring out our tireless questions, clinging to his big hand, playing hide-and-seek in the barn with him, he shouting and laughing as hard as we. And then there were the father and mother together. That mother spoke very little, laughed not at all. When she did speak there was that note in her voice which all we children knew and dreaded. Something I know since of mixed reproach and impatience and injury, a sort of challenge and defense at once. And oh, her marvelous power of saying just the wrong thing, the thing that would touch the raw!

And that father was a man whose hand our little fingers never attempted to touch. Grim, restrained, weary, occasionally terrible with sudden outbursts that ended abruptly, ended with his hasty departure, with a slammed door, a prolonged absence.

Brother and I could not have been over eight and nine when we began to try to head off such scenes, which usually began at table, by pitiful attempts at conversation. A little pale and hurried, we would fling our baby words into the brooding stillness with its unmistakable signs of approaching storm. Try even to drown some cutting remark of mother's, which we instinctively recognized as dangerous, with a rapid demand for something on the table. We never looked at each other during these attempts. No, not even when we were a good deal older and knew exactly why we made them, and after we had long confided to one another that we could be perfectly happy if only we knew that father and mother would not have to keep on seeing each other.

We felt a little guilty. For we feared they might see through these efforts at peace-making. And for some undefined reason it was a point of honor with us not to let either father or mother imagine that we guessed—well, we could not have said what precisely; for a long time we called it "the black thing." Presumably we meant by this the sense of oppression, the atmosphere generated between two people living in the closest intimacy without love.

Yes, that was really what was the matter. The atmosphere of our home was all wrong. And I believe children are particularly susceptible to atmosphere. They are intuitive, understanding a great deal through their feelings which they cannot explain in words.

I do not want you to think that my father and mother tried consciously to hurt each other. That they were unkind or unhappy because they tried to be. Indeed, I knew later from both of them how desperately they endeavored to maintain an appearance of affection because of us children. But children have nothing to do with appearances; they deal with essentials. The one great essential fact was that my father and mother should not have married. They were entirely antipathetic, and after the glamour which brought them together had passed, nothing was left.

Perhaps mother always hoped that she would win father back. I don't think she ever faced facts so clearly as he. In a dim sort of way she must have known that any return of love was impossible. That, in truth, there never had been real love between them. Theirs was the old mistake of youth, that takes the call of sex for that of the individual.

My mother was a good and sweet woman, and married to the right man she would have been a singularly happy one, for she was of a buoyant, singing character, with simple tastes and a real devotion to her home.

My father was of a more difficult temperament, but infinitely more interesting. The woman who really loved *him*, who understood him and sympathized with him, would have won a very high and perfect return. Shy and sensitive, he was at once warm-hearted and reserved. He had a sound tang of humor which must have been dryly amusing when he was young, but which had been turned bitter in the disappointment of his life. For he was a man of imagination, and must often have visualized what he had lost in making a wrong marriage, what he might have made out of life if he had waited for his true mate.

It was not until Emmy was eight that Harry and I realized the difference between our home and a real home. Emmy caught the scarlet fever at that time, falling dangerously ill; her frailness probably dates from that illness. And to keep us safe, we were sent to visit my father's brother, who lived in another town and whom we had never seen.

Here was a different marriage from that of my parents. Uncle Henry and Aunt May were absolutely united and happy in each other. They had two children, a little younger than we, and the entire family lived in the most perfect comradeship.

I have never forgotten the extreme astonishment that swept over me when I first saw my uncle and aunt teasing each other like a couple of mischievous kids, nor when I saw Aunt May seat herself on the arm of her husband's chair, with his arm round her waist, to read a paragraph from a book he held in his hand, and which he was discussing with her.

After the astonishment came an overpowering relief. Relief from habitual terror, for that is what it amounted to. Not a terror for self, but a great, vague fear of life, of being grown up, of what the day might hold.

For the first time in our lives Harry and I were happy. We were too young to retain the impression of the past when we were removed from its influence. The shadow was lifted, and we played in the sun.

When the time came to go home we were jubilant. In the innocence of our young hearts we supposed that the peace by which we had been surrounded would continue. We had forgotten "the black thing."

But it met us at our door, even as we raced into mother's arms, full of our visit. For there was father, smiling at us, in his most winning way. Yet we hesitated to run to him. Because mother was there!

It has always been that way. We never felt like hugging father when mother was in sight. Something constrained us. We kept our endearments for our father-alone.

As soon as we could, we went to the woodshed, where, in a corner consecrated to our own little set of tools, we were in the habit of sharing our confidences.

And there we cried.

Harry and I had been neutral up to this time, siding with neither father or mother. But Emmy was particularly dear to mother, and after Emmy's illness this favoritism became marked. It extended to obvious jealousy of father. Mother would often go out of the room with Emmy when father came in, and once, when father reproved the child for some fault, mother blazed out into fury, telling him she had stood enough, and that at least he should not "torture" her baby. Father turned white, but said nothing. From that moment, however, Harry and I took sides with him and against mother. Not openly, not at first even consciously; none the less decidedly.

In spite of this inner sympathy for father we loved mother, too. I remember after one scene, and these became more frequent as the years passed, sitting for a long while outside mother's door, listening to her sobs and stifled weeping. I do not think I have known any keener misery than I felt then. A horrible sense of loneliness, of helplessness and injustice weighed down my heart.

I yearned toward mother, yet dreaded her and existence together. I felt a dumb, blind rage against father mingled with a frantic sort of pity, and wished, with the utter abandonment of youth, that death might wipe us all out.

As we grew older we were constantly planning how to stay away from home. At school we lingered, and accepted any invitation to go with a schoolmate that offered, scurrying home only just in time for supper. Harry especially began to absent himself, though mother objected. But father said nothing, and this tacit encouragement was enough for the boy. All his holidays were spent with the fellows, either in athletic contests, of which he was fortunately fond, or at some chum's house.

For as time passed and father and mother become more and more estranged, we children also drifted away from both. They never agreed as to our bringing up, their worst quarrels beginning on some question of training or discipline. Gradually any decision they arrived at seemed to us unjust, and left us resentful.

Emmy was an utter stranger to her father, so completely yet so subtly did mother contrive to keep them apart. I don't believe he ever saw her alone. She was afraid of him, and would flush or pale if he spoke directly to her. Naturally he ceased doing so. How he felt about this I do not know, but I have seen his face contract at seeing Emmy shrink from him upon his suddenly entering the room. He invariably spoke of her as "your daughter" to mother, if he mentioned her at all.

You can see that the family was divided. And those divisions intangibly built up between persons in daily contact are sad—they are worse, they are poisonous. There is the apparent community of interest, the pretense at common causes and mutual obligations. While each one is all the time in a hideous sort of isolation, constantly on guard against any frank expression of thought or feeling.

I know that for years my father and mother had never directly looked the one at the other. Perhaps each feared to show, eye to eye, what lay hidden within, and what could be at least partially concealed in voice and act.

After brother went to a preparatory school father and I became much closer. Mother, seeing this, drew away yet more, and the line in the family was sharply accentuated. Emmy and I drifted apart as a natural consequence. We never confided in each other, though I think we were naturally inclined to love one another; but a door had been closed between us that neither of us was capable of opening. Too much unspoken, and yet felt, lay on our hearts for us to dare to be natural together.

Our whole situation was unnatural; it was not God's law, but man's, that held us all together and the stress of the lie upon which the union was founded bore hard upon us, parents and children alike.

About this time I became friends with a girl whose mother had divorced her first husband and married again. The husband had also married. The girl lived with her mother, who had other children by her second marriage. The home was a happy one, and my friend had known a happy childhood, growing up in a congenial, sweet atmosphere, where people loved each other and belonged together.

It was seeing this household that first made me resent the chill and biting air in which we children had been forced to grow up. This friend of mine visited her father at stated times, loved him dearly, and there, too, knew a contented home life. It was not as perfect as though her mother and father had loved each other, and had not needed a divorce, of course. A certain pain remained. But it was a clean pain, like that of the wound left by a surgeon's knife. The pain in our house was that of a sore, constantly fevered and irritated.

One day I said to my father:

" Father, why didn't you and mother separate or get divorced, like Frances's parents?"

He gave me a look, startled at first, then singularly intent.

" This is a strange world," he murmured, half to himself.

" What?" I asked. But I was past my courage, and my voice trembled.

" So you think—you've thought—that your mother and I would be better apart?"

" Dad, dad! We are all unhappy—one can't help seeing that. Everything's wrong."

" Yes, everything's wrong," he said, slowly. And then we walked on in silence.

Oh, you people who speak without knowing! Can love be feigned? Can two persons who are strangers at heart ever be true comrades? Can you bring up a child on a lie?

I tell you the child knows the truth before he can put ten words together; and day by day and year by year he learns in bitterness.

" I hate to come home," Harry confided to me, one vacation. " What's the use? One can't breathe here. Did you notice mother'd been crying at breakfast? And not a word from any of us all through the meal—oh, it's a fine life, I don't think!"

Harry had become cynical at sixteen. As we grew older, the estrangement between our parents made any strong friendship between father and son, or mother and son, impossible. They had different ideas, and neither was willing to relinquish the lead to the other. It ended in leaving Harry to himself. Emmy did at least have a mother, and I a father; but Harry had neither.

And yet " for the sake of the children " we are told that the couple who do not love each other must stay together. Where there is not love and understanding and sympathy between husband and wife, there too there is not fatherhood and motherhood. It turns to poison, and the hearts of the children are seared by it.

One day father came home from business earlier than usual. It was a June day, very lovely, and I had been working in our little rose garden. I saw him coming up the path and ran to him.

" What is it, father?"

He smiled at me. " I don't feel just right," he answered. " Nothing much, but I decided to take the day off. Feel lazy!"

We went into the library together, where I arranged the roses I had gathered. He lay on the lounge. Suddenly he called me.

"Come here, my dear. I want to say something to you."

I drew a chair beside him, and held one of his hands, which was hot and dry, in mine. After a short silence he began carefully, choosing his words:

"I don't know whether I'm doing right, Ellen, but there has been such a lot of lying in life so far, as we have known it, that it seems to me time to speak the truth. Once you asked why your mother and I had not separated or sought a divorce.

"I didn't answer then, but I will now. It was for the sake of you children. It was her decision. I left it in her hands. We had talked everything over, our mistake, our realization that we ought never to have married. It seemed to me that it was a mistake to continue to go on living together. But she said we had brought children into the world and had no longer the right to consider ourselves.

"My dear, I know now that she was wrong. There are relations between people that do not admit any intrusion, not even that of a mutual child. Our mistake in marrying was a bitter one. It is the sort of mistake that must cripple life to a pitiful extent. But it cannot be helped by continuing it. That is now certain in my mind.

"You children would have been far better off if we had separated. I know this, and you know it. A fact is a fact. And most of the trouble of life comes from the refusal to recognize this truth.

"My dear, if you make a mistake in your life, have the courage to refuse to continue by it, at no matter what cost. And now give me a kiss. I couldn't have got along without you—it's all been such a mess."

That night my father died, quite quietly, all alone.

Before the hour for the funeral mother and I went into the room where he had been laid, to arrange the flowers. I felt immensely lonely, and yet there was a strangely familiar feeling that haunted me. I seemed to have gone through it all many, many times.

Mother and I stood for a moment looking down at father's face.

Suddenly she clung to me, sobbing in a frightened sort of way.

"Ellen, Ellen—he's been dead to me, and I to him, so long, so long. . . ."

I shivered, while the tears poured down my cheeks. Suddenly I understood it all. Understood, too, that odd, terrifying sensation of familiarity which had beset me all the time since father's death.

Our house had always been a house of death. We had grown up in its atmosphere, it was the earliest thing we remembered.

Yes, I understood at last what we had meant by "the black thing."

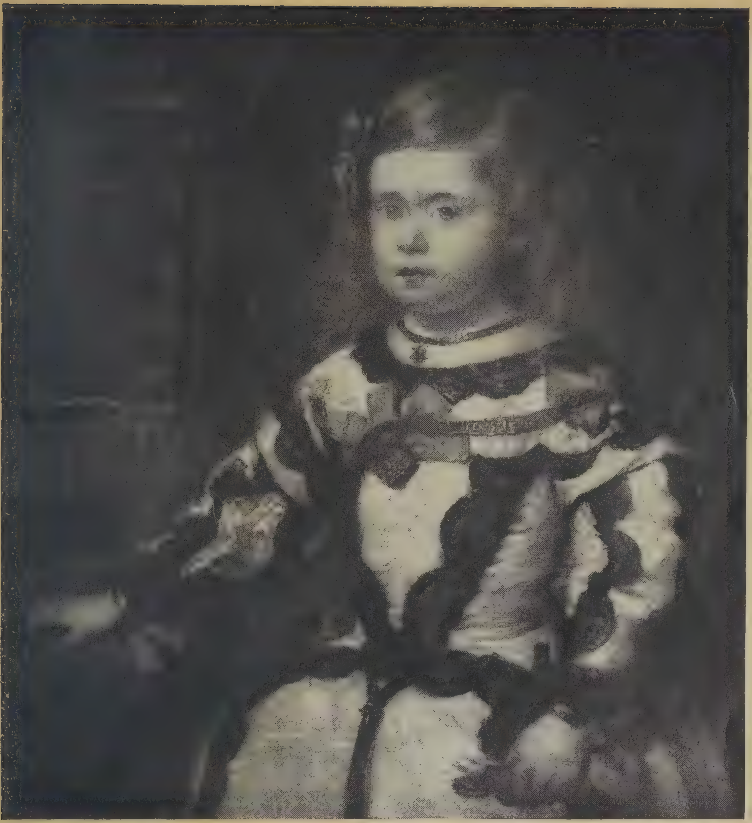
EXPERIENCE

I HAVE known sorrow; therefore now I know
  The worth of laughter. I have been betrayed,
  Tried in the crucible, utterly dismayed;
Henceforth with Truth forever let me go.

I have known men who poured on me their hate;
  How closely now I cleave unto one friend!
  I have heard scandal; therefore I defend
The absent, when foul vultures desecrate.

I have been blind to goodness; now I see
  The glory of her name all names above.
  I have known Judas; therefore give me love
One hour, and I will face Eternity!

Charles Hanson Towne



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DAUGHTER OF PHILIP IV

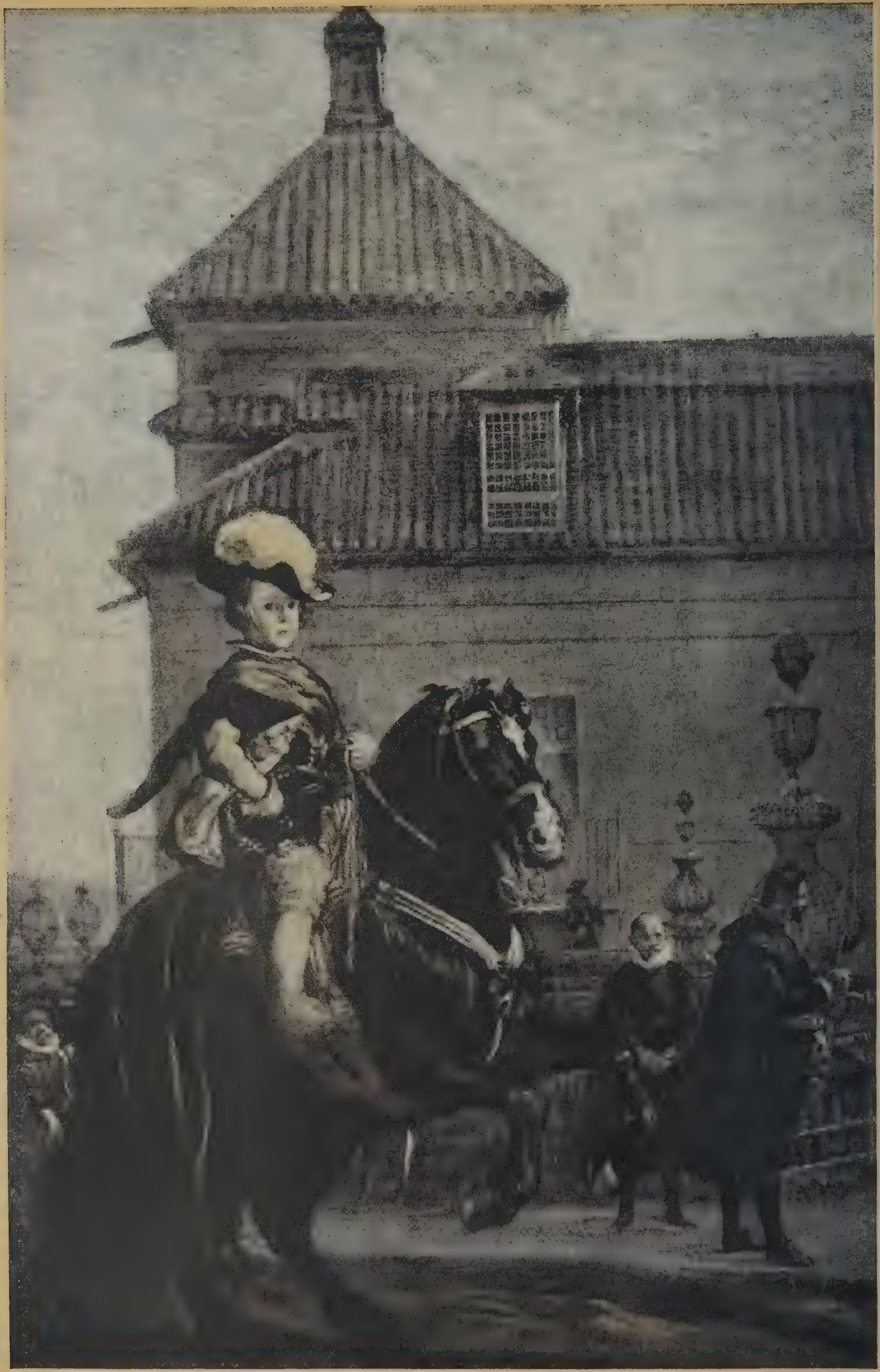
From the painting by Velasquez

CHILDREN IN PAINTINGS

(SIXTH PAPER: VELASQUEZ)

BY CLAYTON HAMILTON

JUST as Edmund Spenser has been called the poet's poet, so Velasquez may be called the painter's painter. In the opinion of innumerable artists of the most divergent tastes, he is commonly regarded as the very greatest craftsman who ever undertook the task of painting. "*Verdad, no pintura,*" was his motto,—"Truth, not painting." He depicted precisely what he saw, with the utmost simplicity of method and the greatest economy of means. He looked upon his sitters with no sentiment, with no emotion, with no enthusiasm even, except the



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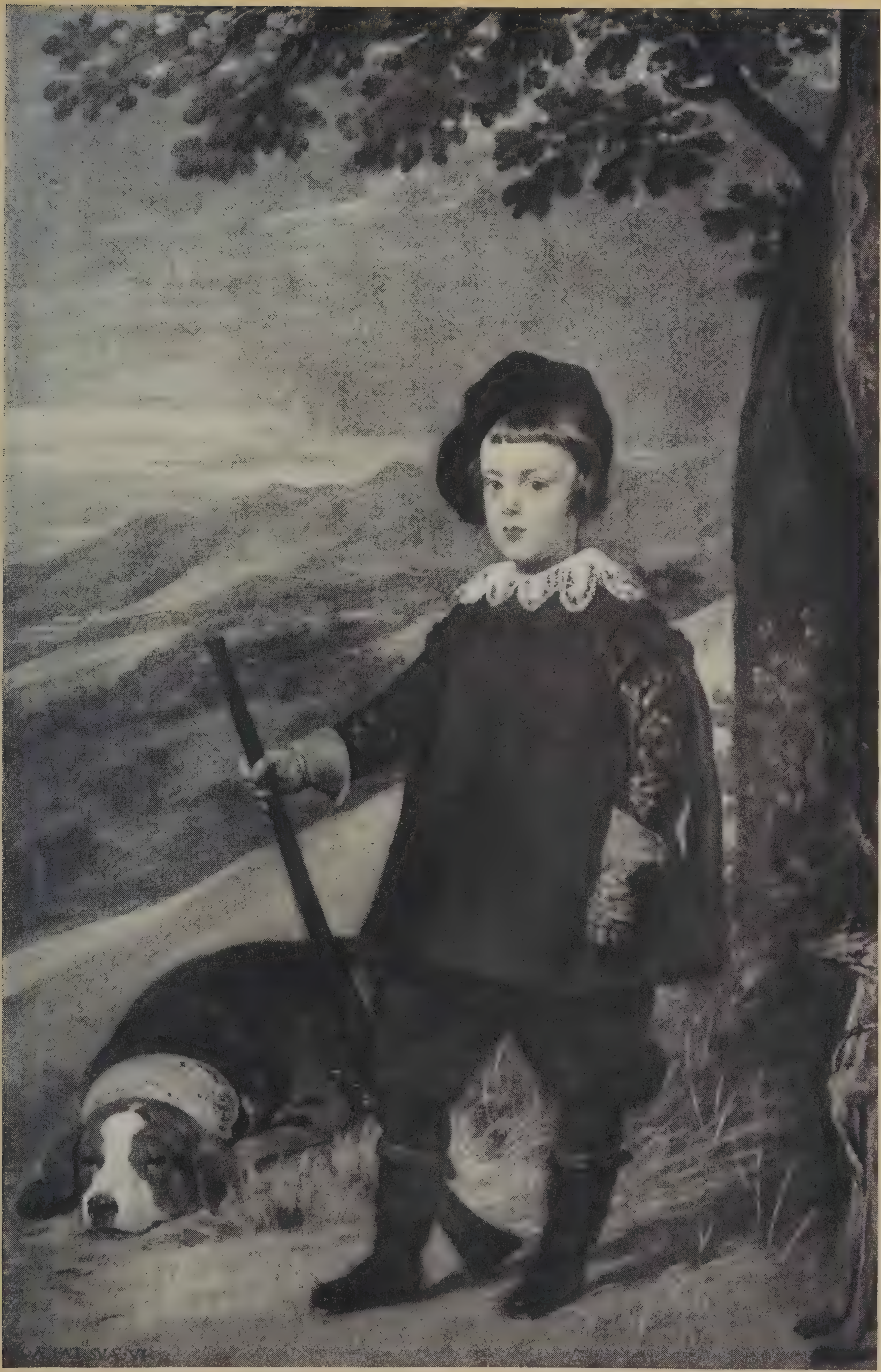
THE RIDING SCHOOL

From the painting by Velasquez



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DON BALTHAZAR CARLOS HUNTING

From the painting by Velasquez

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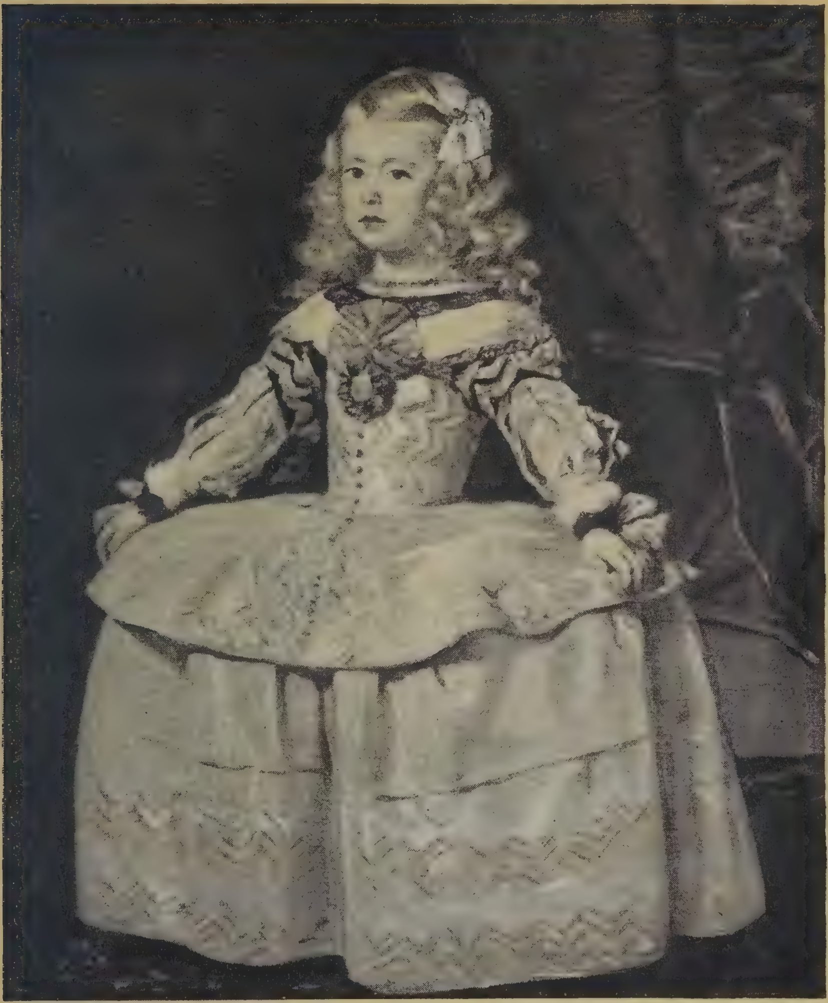
INFANTE DON BALTHAZAR CARLOS

From the painting by Velasquez

enthusiasm of the artist for his art; but the almost terrible intentness of his observation resulted in a record of truth that is supremely beautiful.

Two centuries before Keats was destined to deliver his apostolic message to the world, Velasquez perceived that " Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty "; and every canvas that he ever painted is an assertion that this is all that any artist needs to know. His subjects, for the most part, were imposed upon him by the royal patron whom he served; but to this consummate painter all subjects were equally inspiring. The king himself was a languid, melancholy, lax degenerate, with a long and sagging face,—a thing of putty. It is thus that Velasquez has depicted him,—with no attempt to alter or idealize his aspect, and without the slightest hint of disapproval or approval; yet every portrait of this monarch by Velasquez is a thing of beauty.

The beauty of any painting depends less upon its subject than upon the intentness with which the subject is seen, This fact—which is seldom appreciated by the layman — may be proved by a very simple experiment. Let us imagine the least inspiring subject we can think of. A loaded garbage-can standing in a gutter will serve, perhaps, as well as any other. To the casual eye this object may seem unworthy of a moment's observation. But let me ask the layman to borrow a camp-chair from an undertaker, and sit down on the sidewalk, and fix his eyes intently on that garbage-can for not less than sixty minutes. Let him exclude consideration of anything else in the entire universe except the one thing he is looking at. His mind will soon hypnotize itself into a state which will result in the discovery of unsuspected beauties in that garbage-can.



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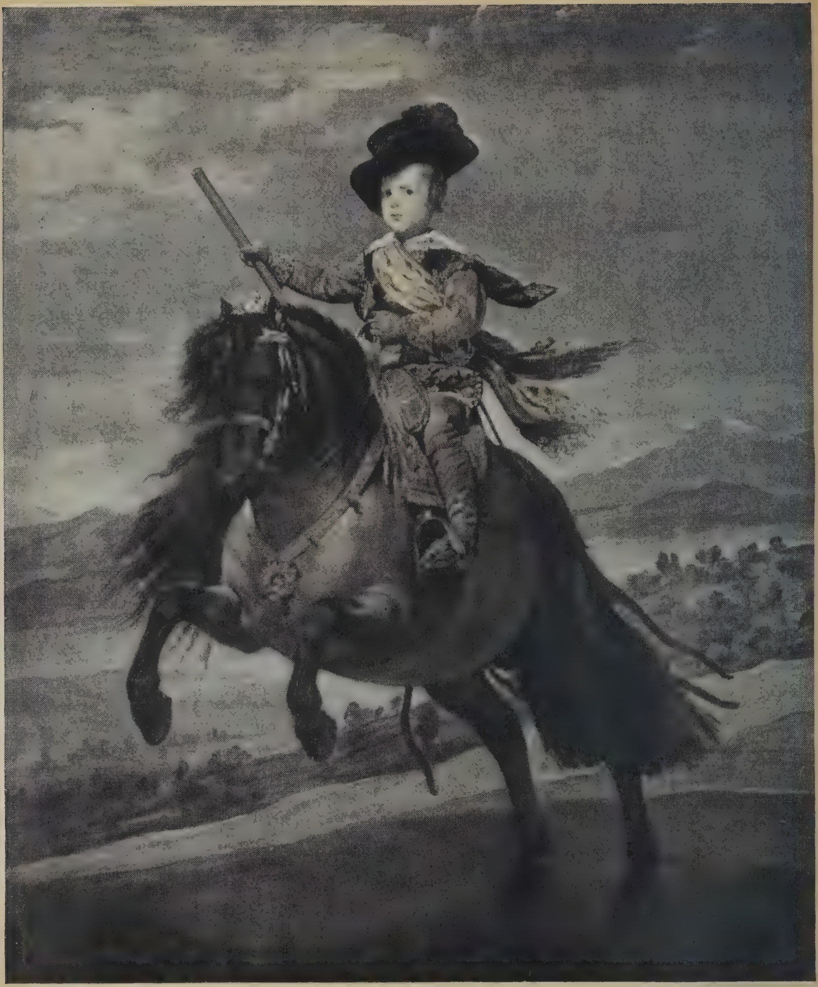
INFANTA MARIA TERESA AT FOUR TO FIVE YEARS OLD

From the painting by Velasquez

He will observe with pleasure the infinite suavity of that gradation between light and shadow which results in his perception of the roundness of the can. He will notice that the can is surrounded with a mystic aureole of light which floats pre-



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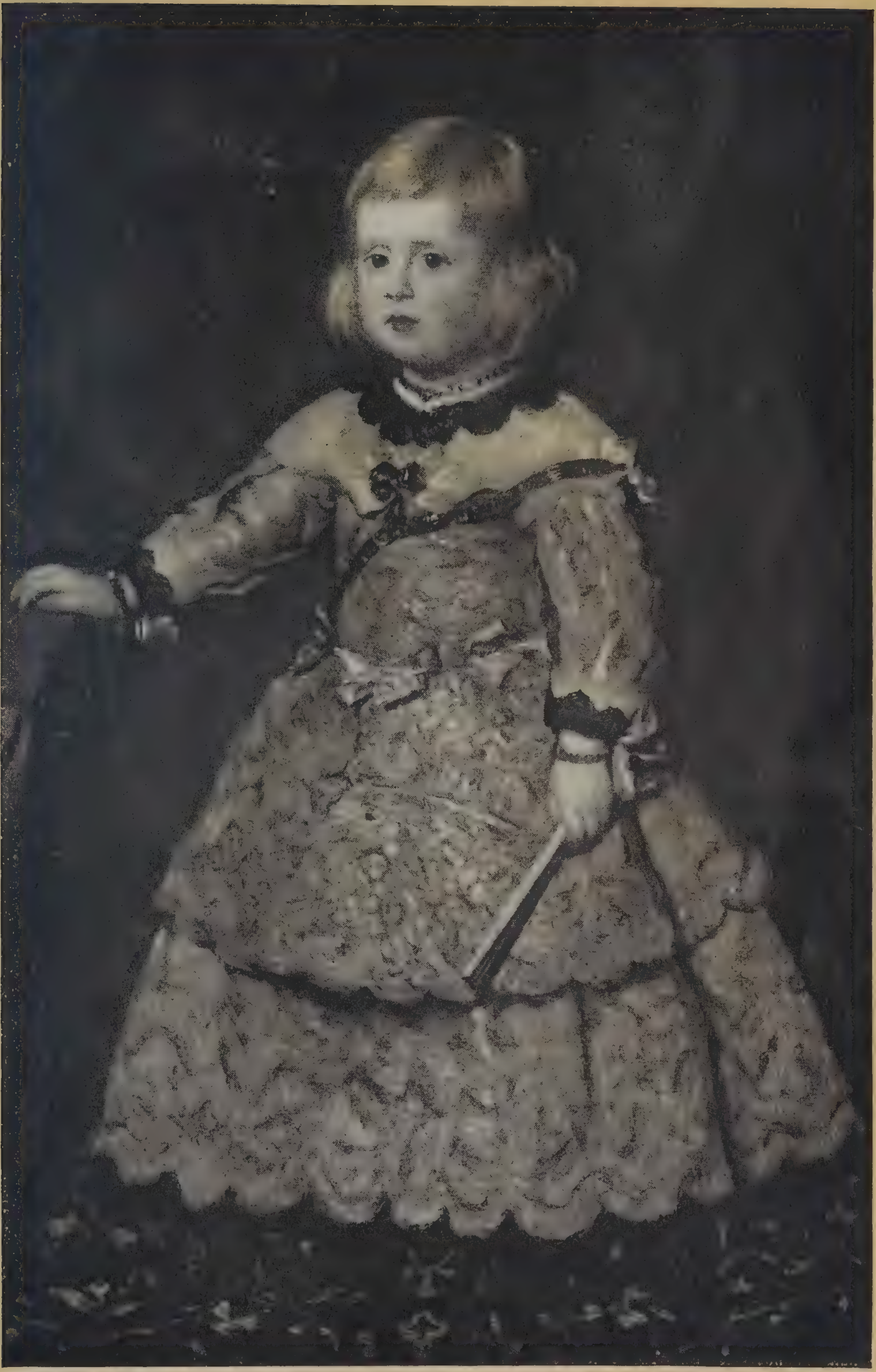
EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF DON BALTHAZAR CARLOS

From the painting by Velasquez

cipitated in the atmosphere. He will begin to glory in the colors of decaying vegetables and in the subtle way in which they accentuate each other's values by propinquity and contrast. In fact, he will learn in a single hour how Velasquez, by rendering that garbage-can precisely as he saw it, could paint a picture which would be more beautiful than any portrait of the Queen of Sheba by a craftsman less equipped to reproduce the utter truth of natural appearances.

This matter must be borne in mind, in order to appreciate the pictures that are reproduced in connection with the present paper. All these little boys and girls were children of Philip IV. They were a sickly and anemic lot; and all but one of them died early. The royal family had been reduced, by inbreeding and by dissipation, to the verge of absolute degeneracy. The children of Philip IV were lacking in looks and lacking in spirit. None of them knew how to play. They wore their artificial and uncomfortable costumes with a sullen resignation to constraint. They were more like wooden dolls than living children.

It should be noted, first of all, that



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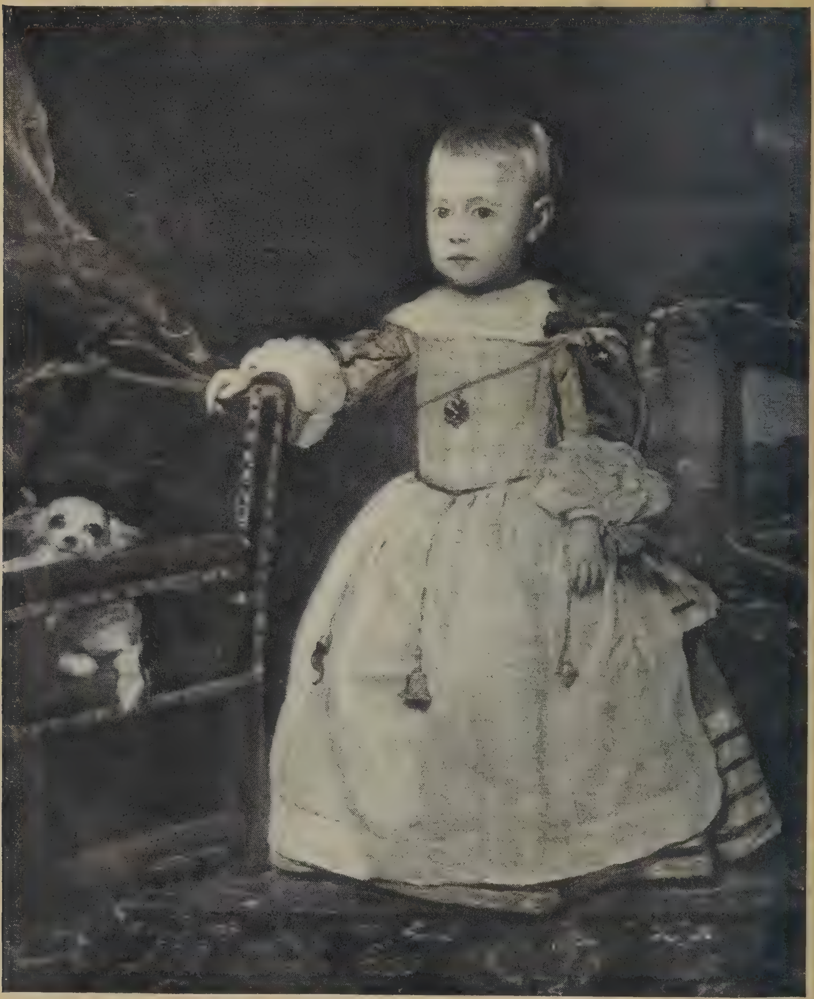
INFANTA MARIA TERESA AT THREE TO FOUR YEARS OLD

From the painting by Velasquez

Velasquez has not attempted to make them seem the slightest bit more lovely or more lively than they really were. He neither idealized them, as Reynolds would have done, nor tried to make us love them, as Van Dyck would have done; he preferred to depict them precisely as he saw them, and to rely upon his sense of color and his sense of light to make his paintings beautiful.

Philip IV was married twice. The eldest child of his first marriage was the Infante Don Balthazar Carlos, who is depicted in four of the paintings that are reproduced herewith. This boy, who was expected to succeed his father on the throne, was the darling of the court. He seems, from the evidences of the painter's vision, to have been the most promising member of the royal family; but he died at the age of seventeen, shortly after he had been betrothed to his cousin, Mariana of Austria.



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INFANTE PHILIP PROSPER

From the painting by Velasquez

The Infanta Maria Teresa, who later

became the queen of France, was the second child of Philip's first marriage. In one of these pictures, she is exhibited in a most uncomfortable skirt that seems to have been designed to keep the whole world at a decorous distance from her royal presence. She was only ten years old when she was imprisoned in this costume; but Velasquez, expressing no opinion of this treatment of a child, discovered in her dress a subtle symphony of pink and silver and was contented to employ the aspect of the little princess as the incentive to one of his most singing canvases.

The untimely death of Don Balthazar Carlos having left the throne without an heir, King Philip promptly married his niece,—that same Mariana of Austria who had previously been betrothed to his son. She was only fifteen years old at the time; and Velasquez's portraits of her assure us that she was a totally dispirited nonentity. She bore the king four children, of whom the two eldest are depicted in the present selection from the paintings of Velasquez. Both of them died in early childhood. The Infanta Margarita is interesting mainly because Velasquez used her as the central figure of "*Las Meniñas*" [" The Maids of Honor "], which is the greatest of all his paintings; but the little Prince Philip Prosper—here depicted at the age of two—is interesting in himself, because of a certain wistful pathos in his " still, superb, unrealizing stare."

The original canvas from which each of these reproductions has been made is a subtle symphony of minor tones of color and minute gradations of shadow and light. It was these appearances of nature that Velasquez was seeking to record; and he was never bothered in his purpose by the fact that his little sitters were lacking in personality.

Velasquez is the most impersonal of painters. His pictures tell us nothing of himself. After spending many mornings in that great room of the Prado in Madrid where the majority of his masterpieces are exhibited, we feel that we know his sitters very well but that we know the painter no better than we did before. He paints his people without comment, and affords us no clue to his predilections or his tastes.

This absolute aloofness of his mind from the subjects of his paintings might be described either as inhuman or as godlike, according to the mood of the observer. Mr. Alfred Noyes, in an inspired line, has spoken of " The splendor of the indifference of God "; and this phrase perhaps most fittingly expresses the mental attitude of Velasquez toward the inconsiderable people whom he has immortalized.

A LAW UNTO HIMSELF

The little that we know of the painter's life contributes to this sense of almost supernatural detachment. He is the least Spanish of Spanish painters, the least seventeenth-century of seventeenth-century painters. He had no predecessors, and he left behind him no immediate successors. As Jonson said of Shakespeare, " He was not of an age, but for all time."

Velasquez was born in Seville in 1599; yet there is nothing of his native city in his art. The common traits of those who come from the capital of Andalusia are an intense religiosity and a lazy, laughing tendency to appreciate the joy of life; but the paintings of this man are never joyous, and his few religious canvases assure us that he took no interest in Christianity. He learned absolutely nothing from any other artist. He was early apprenticed to Francisco de Herrera, a man more eminent as an architect than as a painter; and later to Francesco Pacheco, an academic painter of small consequence, but a man of culture and position. He married a daughter of Pacheco; and his father-in-law helped to bring him to the notice of Philip IV at the time of the latter's ascension to the throne. When Velasquez was only twenty-four, he was appointed court-painter at Madrid; and for thirty-seven years he remained a servant of the king.

In 1628 Peter Paul Rubens came on a diplomatic mission to the Spanish capital and remained there for nine months. He was then about fifty years of age, and enjoying the fulness of his fame. Velasquez was appointed by the king to entertain him. The Spanish painter must have learned much from the companionship of this meteoric man; but there is no trace of any influence of Rubens on his work.

It was in accordance with the advice of Rubens that Velasquez journeyed to Italy in 1629. He was then thirty years of age; his own manner was already formed, and he did not alter it in deference to any method that he observed in Venice or in

Florence or in Rome. He made a second visit to Italy in 1649, for the purpose of buying paintings for the king. On this occasion he purchased many of those Titians and Tintorettos which now help to make the Prado one of the very richest galleries in the world. He declared at this time that he liked Titian but did not like Raphael; yet, after his return to Madrid, his own work remained as little influenced by the great Venetians whom he preferred as by the great Florentines whom he depreciated.

For thirty-seven years, King Philip was his best of friends; yet the personal association between two men so diversely gifted must have been an inconsiderable matter. Philip IV was little better than an imbecile; and Velasquez never had another friend, so far as we know. The great painter must have been " able to be alone,"—which, as Sir Thomas Browne has noted, is an attribute of godlike minds. Velasquez was steadily promoted at court; but each promotion entailed an accretion to the " petty round of irritating concerns and duties," until he was dragged from his studio to perform the silly functions of the Marshal of the Palace. The superfluous task of arranging for the festivities attendant to the marriage of Maria Teresa to the young Louis XIV of France resulted in a fever which eventuated in the painter's death, in 1660.

He had trained his son-in-law, Juan Bautista del Mazo, to copy his manner with an exactitude that has resulted in great confusion to historical critics of the art of painting; but his method died with Mazo, and he remained as utterly without successors as he had triumphed without predecessors in his special craft. Not until the nineteenth century was Velasquez imitated to advantage,—notably by Manet and by Whistler, who endeavored, not without success, to recapture his intensity of vision and his simplicity of rendering.

The position of Velasquez as the supreme craftsman in the art of painting is unassailed by any controversy; and yet it is curious to note that this position has been assigned to him on the strength of comparatively few canvases. According to his latest authoritative critic, Don Aureliano de Beruete, there are only eighty-nine indisputable pictures by Velasquez in the world. Admitting several other canvases to the category, which are now ascribed to Mazo, we must still acknowledge that Velasquez painted fewer pictures in his entire lifetime of sixty-one years than Sir Joshua Reynolds or Peter Paul Rubens are known to have executed in a single year. It is evident that Velasquez must have painted very slowly. It took him a long time to discern that utter Truth which is synonymous with Beauty; but he remained as indifferent to haste as to any other temporal concern. He was, indeed, a godlike painter; and the ticking of a clock is never audible to the eternal minds of those who dwell above the twirling of the spheres.

TO LYDIA, WITH A ROMAN TRINKET

Accept this trifling gift, I pray;
I picked it from the quaint array
Heaped in a little shop beside
The quay that banks the Tiber's tide.
'Tis old and worn, but I can trace
The outline of a classic face,
And letters four that proudly frame
The ancient city's queenly name—
ROMA.

Oh, may it speed my message well,
And say what I would have it tell;
For wheresoe'er my steps may be,
My thoughts, dear maid, are still with thee.
But list—if thou wouldst read aright
The word that I would fain indite,
Reverse the letters graven there,
And lo, my heart they will declare—
AMOR.

R. H. Titherington

EXTRAVAGANCE

BY REDFIELD INGALLS

HERMANN SCHULTZ sat in his little music store plunged in gloomy reflections. Things had been going badly. It was the dull season; patrons were none too many and their purchases were meager. The butcher and baker were becoming insistent, not to mention the grocer, and the rent would be due to-morrow. He was more dollars shy for that than he cared to think about.

He picked up the afternoon paper again and stared resentfully at the big headlines on the front page and the pictures that went with them.

"Look at dot!" he growled, though there was no one to hear. "Dose *verdammte* plutokraten, dey make me sick. Hard-vorkin' men ain'dt got enough to pay deir bills, und dose, dey vaste deir money on such a foolishness! *Ach Himmel,* it vas a pity—"

The door opened to the tinkle of the little bell and a middle-aged man entered with alert and purposeful step.

"Afternoon," he greeted Hermann cheerfully. "I want to get a fiddle for my little girl."

II

HOWEVER, this story really begins with the inheritance by Percy Vandercoy of the Vandercoy millions. Percy had not yet reached his thirties and he was very much in love, so the first thing he thought of when the final legal formalities that put him among the multimillionaires were completed, was a present for Dorothy.

For which reason he appeared one morning in the private office of James Wolf, the world-famous jeweler, ushered by an exceedingly deferential clerk. Mr. Wolf glanced at the name on the bit of pasteboard and got hastily to his feet.

"Mr. Vandercoy!" he exclaimed. "This is indeed a surprise, sir. Is there something that we can do for you?"

"There is," said Percy. "I want to get a birthday present for — er — a lady. Something — er — exclusive, you know — unique."

With a ray of hope Mr. Wolf thought of a white elephant that he had had on his hands ever since the death of a Venezuelan for whom he had purchased it several months before. He excused himself a moment and gave some brief orders over the phone.

Presently entered a relay of clerks with several large jewel boxes. They were ranged on the desk and opened one by one, showing splendors of shimmer and sparkle, the ice and fire of diamonds and rubies, the delicate sheen of pearls, the richness of gold and platinum and the beauty of intricate and ravishing designs. Each case that was opened revealed something more exquisite than the last.

Mr. Wolf dwelt on the excellencies of each, secretly hoping that his eloquence would prove unavailing, yet knowing the value of working up to a climax; and at last the gem of gems was displayed.

As the sun quenches the chaste loveliness of the moon, so did this necklace overwhelm and render cheap and tawdry all that had gone before. Percy loosed a little gasp of admiration.

"This," he declared firmly, "is just what I want. You needn't say that there is nothing like it in New York, because I know it already. How do you value it, Mr. Wolf?"

The jeweler mentioned a price, repressing with difficulty the tremble that threatened his voice.

Percy sighed gently and reached for his check-book. He was not one to haggle.

"It's horribly extravagant, I know," he said, "but the chair of applied therapeutics in the University of Hawaii will simply have to wait. Nothing less than this is worthy of her. Wrap it up and I'll give it to her this afternoon."

After Mr. Vandercoy's departure Mr.

Wolf regarded the check before him with great satisfaction and a little awe. It can happen to even the biggest of jewelers to be in financial difficulties, and this check meant a good deal to him. It would clear off outstanding debts and set the business firmly on its feet again; would warrant the purchase of a stock that should be second to none in the city for the Christmas trade, would—

It occurred to him suddenly that the work on his new house was not progressing as rapidly as circumstances seemed to warrant. The architects were dilatory, and Mr. Wolf imagined that he knew why. It was the old case of ready cash and the lame mare.

Then came the thought of his pretty young wife and her long-desired limousine. He hesitated for a moment and was lost.

"The architects are in no hurry for their money," he thought. "I'll give them something on account next month. By Jove, I'll go and see the Swiftdart people right away. Gad, won't the little woman be surprised!"

He called up his advertising manager, told him the news and suggested a couple of afternoon papers that would be interested.

"You'd better give the price in round numbers, you know," he advised. "It sounds better." Then he took his hat and went out.

III

Later in the day Herbert Jones, star salesman for the Swiftdart car, bowed Mr. Wolf out with much deference and returned to the inner office with a precious bit of paper in his hand.

"I got five thousand for that limousine," he announced with considerable satisfaction. "Pretty good for the dog days, eh? By the way, my commission is ten per cent—how's chances to get it right away, Mr. Matthews? I could use it."

The senior member of the firm nodded smilingly.

"You did a good piece of work, Jones," he said. "We've had that car on our hands for nearly three months and I was getting worried. All but out of style.

"Yes, you can deposit that check now, if you like, and here's one for your commission." He wrote rapidly. "You'll just have time to get to the bank before it closes."

Jones started homeward half an hour later with a fat roll of bills in his pocket and joy in his heart. He was thinking of his talented young daughter and the furor she was bound to make at her first recital a few days hence. A violinist of no small ability, she was in a fair way to make a name for herself.

The pall that hung over that recital was her instrument. The cost of high, or even respectable, living is no small matter when one has a big family to bring up, even if one *is* an automobile salesman; and she had had to be content with a very indifferent violin ever since she had started to take lessons.

This unexpected windfall would send the wife to the country, for one thing, he thought. It would buy new outfits for the children, would pay that loan shark in full, would—

And this was the thought that had preceded all the others. It would buy Coral a good violin to use at the recital to which she was looking forward!

"I'll do it," he decided. "The tailor's a good fellow, and he won't mind waiting another week or so for his money." He got off the "L" train and turned in at the door of a little music store whose bell tingled.

"Afternoon," he greeted the proprietor. "I want to get a fiddle for my little girl."

Which brings us back to where we started.

IV

Hermann Schultz jumped up with alacrity, dropping his paper on the counter.

"Vot kind of a fiddle, mister?" he inquired. He had a few on hand and despaired of ever getting rid of them. They are so little in demand.

"Well," said Jones reflectively, "something middling good. Something at about fifty dollars."

"Ach, I haf choost vat you vant!" cried Hermann joyfully, opening his show-case. "It's der best vot I got. Stradiwarioos model, flat by der back, und oh, sooch a lofely tone! See, I show you." He tuned the instrument and struck a few notes. "I keep it alvays choost so und blay on it sometimes. Dot's vot makes der goot fioleen."

"It's a beauty," agreed Jones admiringly. "And the price?"

"Vell, I tell you. I gif you der strings und a goot bow und a case und I charge you choost fifty."

"I'll go you," nodded Jones with decision, and counted the money down.

As Hermann turned to wrap up the purchase he saw the offending newspaper, and the wrongs of the downtrodden surged back on him again.

"Ain'dt it awful de vay dose millionaires carries on?" he complained. "Look vot's by der paper."

"'Gives Bride-To-Be Half-Million-Dollar Necklace!'" Jones read aloud. "'Percy Vandercoy, Newest Millionaire, Indulges in Reckless Extravagance for Beautiful Dorothy Todd, His Fiancée.' Gosh, ain't it the limit the way they throw their money away?"

"Ain'dt it choost?"

"Look at the pictures of him and her —and it. Can't say I think much of 'em. Why didn't he build a library?"

"Dot vould be some goot, yes."

"S'pose they'll give a monkey supper to celebrate the wedding. And I bet he keeps his florist and perfumer waiting for their cash. We ordinary citizens are different."

"You bet me," agreed Hermann heartily. "*Ve* got some sense. Goot efening—call again."

Alone, he regarded the money with glistening eyes. He'd be on Easy Street now for a while. This would help pay the rent and the butcher and baker. He could—

His eyes widened at a sudden thought. "By Yimmeny, I do it! Der doctor von't care, und anyvay I'm a old gustomer. I get die Mutter a new hat for Sunday. Ach, von't she look schvell alretty! I vill pay—*ja,* five dollars!"

He glanced around the shop preparatory to closing up for the evening and his eyes fell on the newspaper.

"Ach, dose *verdammte* plutokraten!" he growled. "Dey make me sick."

POPULATING THE SEAS

THE RECENT BOOM IN THE OCEAN-CARRYING TRADE AND ITS FURTHER EXPANSION THAT WILL COME WITH THE OPENING OF THE PANAMA CANAL

BY THADDEUS S. DAYTON

NEVER since the world began have there been so many merchant ships on the seas. There has been in shipbuilding a tremendous boom, which, though declining, still continues. Construction and completion are racing neck and neck. New keels are being laid at the rate of about three a day, while three new vessels take their first plunge into the water. Freighters they are for the most part—the big delivery wagons of the deep that plod over the long sea roads.

While the effects of this remarkable expansion in the ocean-carrying trade are seen principally in British shipyards, the many causes are mostly American. First, there is the completed Panama Canal, with the consequent rearrangement of trade routes and the shifting of traffic from other watery highways. Then there is the opening up of many new regions of the earth, rich in possibilities of production of the great staples. Also new uses have been found for these staples, and new articles of great importance commercially are being constantly discovered or developed in connection with them.

The markets of the world are expanding at a prodigious rate. Of prime importance also is the stupendous growth of the foreign commerce of the United States. This is a rich and tangible prize for which the merchant navies of the world are contending — more than four billion dollars' worth of merchandise a year to be carried to and fro over the seas.

England is the center of the world's shipbuilding. Four years ago the outlook there seemed gloomy indeed. It was estimated in 1909 that there were a million net tons of British shipping in commission more than actually were needed. Freight rates were at their lowest ebb; coal, provisions, wages and insurance were high. This state of things continued until September, 1910. Then the boom began. The pendulum started on its long sweep in the other direction. Since then until very recently, the demand for ships has exceeded the supply. The present slump in rates, however, indicates a decrease in demand.

Figures regarding shipbuilding — like those relating to astronomy—are so big that they may seem uninteresting and even incomprehensible. Yet they are full of meaning if one stops to think.

In the second half of 1909 there were less than 750,000 gross tons under construction in British shipyards, which almost equaled the depressing record of 1896. In the first quarter of 1913 the returns compiled by Lloyd's Register of Shipping showed that there were 563 vessels, of 2,063,694 gross tons, under construction in the United Kingdom. This latter total was 1,318,000 tons higher than in June, 1909, and was greater than any previous total ever recorded by Lloyd's since that ancient and famous society was founded. The shipyards outside of Great Britain were no less busy, with 392 vessels of 1,348,000 gross tons under construction.

Warships and vessels of less than one hundred tons are excluded from these shipping statistics.

At the opening of 1914 there was but little falling off in the volume of work under way. The tonnage under construction in the shipyards of the United Kingdom totaled 1,956,606 gross, and in all the rest of the world 1,374,537—only a little more than 80,000 tons less than the "peak" attained a twelvemonth previous.

When one considers the vast quantity of steel and timber and machinery and labor, and the many other things that have to be assembled and used in the building of a ship, and then multiplies it by one thousand or by two thousand, the importance of this boom in shipbuilding and its relation to the other industries of the world becomes apparent. There is not an inland city in America, for instance, that does not derive more or less direct benefit from this work that is going on along our own coasts and overseas. Still more obvious are the advantages that follow: the freer interchange and wider distribution of the world's commodities.

Deep sea freighters range from one thousand to ten thousand tons burden. More than three-fifths of the boats that have been built recently and are now under construction are between these limits. One hundred and nine of them are between four thousand and six thousand tons—the favorite size for cargo carrying. Of the big boats—the huge passenger and mail steamers that run almost at express train speed along the ocean roads—there are thirty-six now on the stocks. These range from ten thousand to more than forty thousand tons each.

No exact statistics have been compiled as to the total monetary value of the ships now afloat or building throughout the world, for the worth of a vessel fluctuates continually. As a rule—theoretically—it begins to depreciate the moment the boat goes into commission and continues to do so steadily until the end of the chapter. But this extraordinary boom in shipbuilding and in the ocean carrying trade has upset every theory and precedent. Vessels built five or six years ago are worth more to-day than when they were launched. Foreign vessels now under construction have been selling at an advance of about seventy per cent above the market values of the early part of 1910.

A five thousand ton freighter is a big boat and represents a large investment. Such a vessel will be about four hundred feet in length and will cost in the neighborhood of half a million dollars. The upkeep of such a boat—the coal, crew, dockage and all other expenses—averages about $400 a day. But in prosperous times, when trade is brisk, the profits are very large. Many of the "tramp" lines have been paying dividends of eight to fourteen per cent in the last four years. As the size of the boat increases the cost grows proportionately.

Passenger carrying steamers, especially the Transatlantic liners, are floating palaces — huge hotels on whose adornment and equipment money is lavished without stint. Immensely powerful boilers and engines are necessary to drive them swiftly, and their consumption of coal on a single voyage would be sufficient for the average freighter for a year.

By the end of 1914 it is estimated that

the total number of merchant ships afloat upon the oceans of the world will exceed 40,000, and that their total tonnage will be more than 55,000,000. Three-fourths of these are steamers, and the rest are sailing craft. The tonnage of the latter, however, is only about one seventh of the total. Boats of less than one hundred tons gross register, wooden vessels trading on the Great Lakes and ships on the Caspian Sea are not included.

In the number and tonnage of its merchant ships Great Britain is far ahead of any other country. Nearly half the vessels afloat are British. The general impression is that the United States is nowhere as a maritime nation. This is not correct. According to the latest issue of Lloyd's Register this country ranks next to Great Britain, with a total gross tonnage of nearly 6,000,000 distributed among more than 3,500 ships. Then comes Germany, close at our heels. That nation has less than 2,500 ships, but their individual tonnage is large—within 500,000 of our total. Norway outranks France and almost equals Germany in the number of her ships, but her boats are small in size. Their total tonnage is less than half that of the German fleet.

Germany and France, however, are building vessels faster than we are. In American yards a year ago eighty-five vessels of 228,156 gross tons were being constructed, as compared with France's forty-two ships of 243,404 gross tons, and Germany's ninety-six, whose tonnage totaled 534,412. At the opening of this year the number of vessels we had under construction was sixty-six, and their tonnage 147,597. France was building three ships less than a year before, but their aggregate tonnage was nearly the same; and Germany showed an increase of six ships and of 10,000 in tonnage.

With the opening of the gates of Panama five new ocean routes will be created: one to the west coast of South America, a second to Australia and New Zealand, a third to the Philippines and Oceanica, a fourth to the East Indies and Southern Asia, and the last of all to China and Japan. Not even the most astute of the great commercial sea lords who scan the horizons of trade from their watchtowers in London, New York and Hamburg can do more than hazard guesses as to the rearrangements of trade and the shifting of fleets that the opening and expansion of commerce and old markets will bring about in the next five years. On only one point do they agree unanimously: that the world is on the threshold of a tremendous commercial boom, and that its stimulating cause is the opening of our great canal.

There always has been and always will be more competition in water transportation than in carrying freight and passengers by land. The railroad that pushes its lines into a new and undeveloped territory usually has the field to itself for a long time. Building railroads is more expensive than building ships. Fifty miles of new railroad is about equal to the cost of a five-thousand ton freighter—and all the waterways of the world are open to the ship. The right of way on the ocean costs nothing. Also the tides of commerce usually rise and fall less sharply on the sea than on the land.

All over the world the ships follow certain well-defined routes in their voyaging. Whether these are almost deserted or are crowded makes little difference. It is the number of miles between one city's sea gate and another's that counts. The principal sufferer from the impending changes will be Panama's only competitor, the Suez Canal.

When the gates of Panama are opened to the commerce of the world there will be even a greater change in trade routes than was brought about by the dominance of steam over sails. In former times the prevailing winds at different seasons, the set of various ocean currents, and similar natural phenomena determined the great marine highways. Natural causes still play some part. The lanes used by the great Transatlantic liners, for instance, shift with the ice drift from the north. But steam has little to fear from winds and waves.

The ancient world knew only a few of the sea roads that are traversed to-day. Ships crept along the coasts or voyaged timorously from island to island. Although the waters of the world are now criss-crossed in every direction, it is still possible to find wide areas in which a sail or a steamship's smoke are not seen from one year's end to another. One of these is a vast tract in the South Atlantic. Its northern boundary is the route followed by vessels between North American ports and Gibraltar, and its southern the course of the ships between Europe and the east coast of South America. So vast is this watery desert that a ship astray there might call in vain by wireless for help. In the middle of this almost untraversed area is the Sargasso Sea, that vague, mysterious wilderness of clinging seaweed, the traditional center of most of the ocean's greatest mysteries, exploited by fiction writers, far from the traveled ways of man.

The opening of Panama will send many ships straight across a deserted part of the Pacific that is even larger than the one in the South Atlantic. This ocean desert extends from latitude 45 degrees to 10 degrees south, and from the coast of South America almost to New Zealand. There is hardly a rock or a reef in all this vast expanse of sea. It is as lonely and desolate as the remotest part of the Sahara. There is still another untracked waste of water in the Indian Ocean. This reaches from 40 degrees south latitude to the equator, and from Mauritius and other tiny islands off the African coast clear to Australia.

With the great shifting of trade routes that will come next year, and the remarkable increase in the number of ships that traverse them, is likely to come the adoption of new means for the relief of vessels in distress. There is talk of establishing a system of guard or patrol ships to watch over the ocean roads and search for vessels requiring assistance or those that are overdue, from which nothing has been heard. Such a system of safeguards would have to be an international matter.

The patrol boats would be small, but equipped with the most powerful wireless apparatus possible. They would steam back and forth over certain defined stretches of sea, like policemen patrolling their beats.

This plan, it is contended, while it would not eliminate the inevitable hazards of the sea, would reduce them materially.

CHANTEY OF THE WEST WIND

"Yo ho! Yo ho!" the west wind sings
  All merrily and strong,
And with it goes the flash of wings
And all the joy of living things
  Like spirits of its song.

"Yo ho! Yo ho! for the hills that know
  How near the stars can be;
Yo ho! Yo ho! for the plains that show
  Their broad breasts bare and free;
Yo ho! Yo ho! for the ships that go
  Across the pulsing sea."

The west wind sings, and my heart sings, too,
O'er the hills and the plains and the sea to you.

The hills reply with many a voice
  Of sturdy tree and stream.
The plains make answer and rejoice
Through all the minstrels of their choice
  With great tones of a dream.
The sea sings low, but its voices go
  With gull and spreading sail,
"Yo ho! Yo ho! for the hearts that know
  The thrill of the billow's trail;
Yo ho! Yo ho! for the lights that glow
  In the bay beyond the gale."

The west wind sings, and my heart sings, too,
With the hills and the plains and the sea to you.

Glenn Ward Dresbach

ALICE BRADY, THE DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM A. BRADY, THE THEATRICAL MANAGER, IS BOTH PRIMA DONNA AND ACTRESS. SHE HAS BEEN PLAYING THE HEROINE IN "THE THINGS THAT COUNT," BUT IS NOW SINGING AGAIN WITH THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERA COMPANY

From her latest photograph by White, New York

THE PRICE OF POPULARITY

WHAT IT HAS COST AMBITIOUS STAGE STARS TO SACRIFICE ART TO THE DEMANDS OF AN INSISTENT PUBLIC

BY BURNS MANTLE

NOT long ago Miss Laurette Taylor, having played the heroine in "Peg o' My Heart" for something more than five hundred times without having missed a cue or a performance, announced that she was tired and must have a rest. When the announcement was made public it was explained that to Miss Taylor a rest meant a change, and a change suggested a new play—something that would take her away from the sweetly sentimental into the boldly dramatic; something that would stir her mind and give zest to a dormant ambition.

In her secret heart, however, we suspect the actress's longing was not so much for a change as it was for an opportunity to disabuse the public mind in New York of a fast settling conviction that she was a one-part actress.

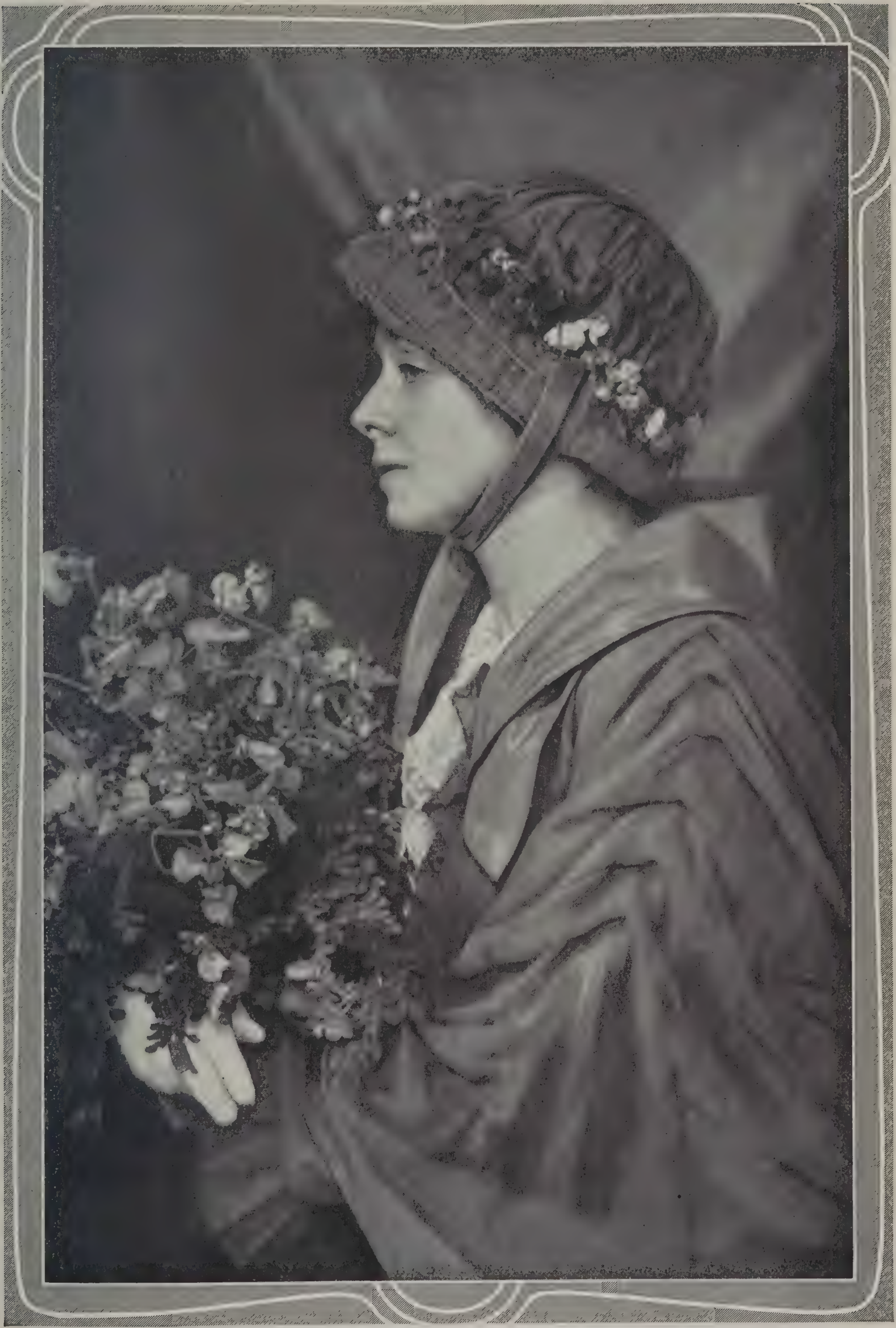
She was not content to have her following accept her as a rising and therefore a contented star, nor was she satisfied with being accepted as a popular stage idol with a limited histrionic range. And unless something were done to change that opinion she saw herself one more victim to idolatry, forced to go on for years and years playing *Peg*, or one of *Peg's* numerous kin, until the impression should become fixed that she could do nothing else.

RUTH CHATTERTON, WHO HAD HER FIRST BIG CHANCE WITH HENRY MILLER IN "THE RAINBOW," IS NOW BEING FEATURED IN A DRAMATIZATION OF "DADDY LONGLEGS"

From her latest photograph—Copyrighted by Bushnell, Seattle

The curse of popularity threatened her, and she was worried. Let me tell you why:

At the beginning of the theatrical season which is now about to close, Mr. John Drew determined to reclaim his honor as a versatile and capable actor by presenting himself in a classic rôle. For eighteen or twenty years he had been playing a series of what had come to be known as johndrew heroes, and for this amiable loyalty to an insistent public he had been frequently



MAUDE ADAMS WILL FINISH OUT THE PRESENT SEASON IN NEW YORK PLAYING SIR JAMES BARRIE'S "LEGEND OF LEONORA." SHE WILL SPEND HER VACATION IN EUROPE, PART OF IT IN A CLOISTERED RETREAT, HER FAVORITE WAY OF RESTING

From her latest photograph by De W. C. Ward, New York

THREE SEASONS AGO IRENE FENWICK QUIT MUSICAL COMEDY. SHE IS NOW PLAYING THE HEROINE IN "ALONG CAME RUTH"

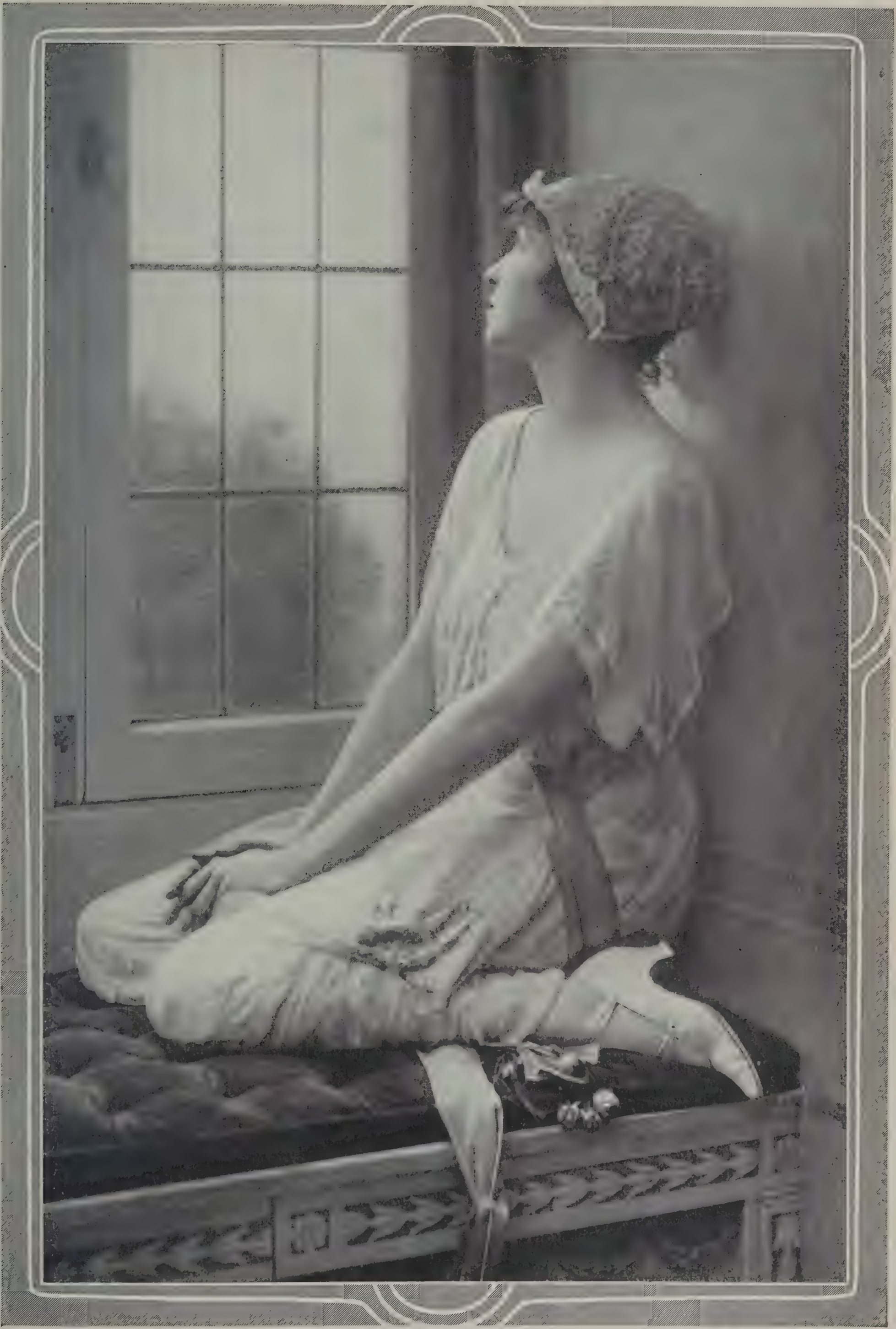
From her latest photograph by White, New York

railed at by his critics. Therefore he would this season revive "Much Ado About Nothing," play *Benedict* and re-establish his artistic credit. The result was a more or less pathetic failure, and his harshest critics were those who had taken the most pleasure in calling attention in other years to what we might term his repertorial delinquencies.

Not more than a month or so ago, at the very height of the present theatrical season, Mr. William Faversham, after having devoted two years to establishing himself in a Shakespearian repertoire, with more than creditable revivals of "Julius Cæsar" and "Othello" a part of the record, as well as a handsome and costly production of "Romeo and Juliet" ready to be introduced, announced his temporary retirement from the field. He would go into vaudeville with "The Squaw Man," which his public adored, and quit Shakespearian plays which it scouted, and await a more propitious season for his return to the classics.

About the time Miss Taylor was praying for relief from the obligations of a popular success Mr. Charles Frohman was telegraphing daily to Miss Billie Burke, then appearing in Boston, advising her to cease playing "The Land of Promise," which she loved and in which she had achieved, artistically, the most important success of her career, and take up a new comedy with a happier if less realistic background called "Jerry." Her public, which has grown large enough and financially of enough importance to direct her as to the way she should go, insists upon seeing not Billie Burke, the growing actress, but Billie Burke, the fluffiest and prettiest of contemporary ingénues. So she is forced to give up the thing she wants to do, which is the thing she considers worth doing, and return to the thing her public demands.

As bending straws indicating the direction of the wind, these current incidents mean nothing. They are but repetitions of similar experiences in which the public and the theater have figured. The fact that the personal star system is as generally approved in the American theater as it has been in the English theater from the day of Burbage to that of Forbes-Robertson has never been successfully contradicted. But they do indicate the situation which has frightened Miss Taylor. The price



MRS. VERNON CASTLE IS ONE OF THE DANCING SPRITES WHO HAS BEEN SWEPT TOWARD SOMETHING LIKE NATIONAL FAME ON THE CREST OF THE TANGO WAVE. SHE WAS BORN IN NEW ROCHELLE, WHICH, AS MR. COHAN ONCE EXPLAINED, IS 45 MINUTES FROM BROADWAY

From a photograph—Copyrighted by Moffett, Chicago

RUTH ROSE HAS BEEN PLAYING THE RÔLE OF ASEMATH, THE BELOVED SWEETHEART OF JOSEPH, IN "JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN." SHE COMES BY HER INTEREST IN THE STAGE QUITE NATURALLY. HER FATHER IS EDWARD EVERETT ROSE, THE PLAYWRIGHT

From a photograph by the Otto Sarony Company, New York

that stage favorites have paid for their popularity has made many of them rich but few of them happy.

The public wanted John T. Raymond to go on playing *Colonel Mulberry Sellers* until he died. Raymond refused to do it and died poor. The public wanted Frank Mayo to stick to *Davy Crockett*. Mayo was ambitious and it cost him a fortune. Only "Pudd'nhead Wilson," coming in at the last, saved him from poverty.

Joseph Jefferson stuck to *Rip* and Denman Thompson was true to *Joshua Whitcomb*, both mediocre characters, but they died rich and honored. James A. Herne was not satisfied to let "Shore Acres" stand for all that the stage meant to him, which the public would have preferred him to do, and as a result his fortunes were at a low ebb when he passed on.

Nat Goodwin was ambitious, artistically as well as matrimonially, and now he is playing "Never Say Die," a William Collier farce which the comedian-author, never for a moment Goodwin's artistic equal, discarded after it had served his purpose. W. H. Crane was ambitious and capable, but if some one had not had the good common sense to lift him bodily out of "Business is Business," when he wanted to become a serious actor and put him down in the center of "Father and the Boys" he would probably have lost everything except his lingerie.

Francis Wilson once followed a farce with a serious playlet, "The Little Father of the Wilderness," in which he played, to his artistic advantage, a sympathetic monk, hiding his comedy legs under a clerical cloak. But his audiences refused to stop laughing, and he did not try the experiment a second season.

Henry E. Dixey, the most versatile of American actors, a man to whom all honors histrionic have been possible in his time, has little more to show for his career than a bundle of laudatory reviews and a circle of admiring friends. But Chauncey

ALICE DOVEY, BEING ONE OF THE PRETTIEST MUSICAL COMEDY SOUBRETTES IN AMERICA, IS NOT OFTEN ALLOWED TO GET FAR AWAY FROM NEW YORK PRODUCTIONS. THIS SEASON SHE IS SINGING IN "THE QUEEN OF THE MOVIES" AND DIVIDING BEAUTY HONORS WITH VALLI VALLI

From her latest photograph by White, New York

THE POPULARITY OF GERALDINE FARRAR AT THE METROPOLITAN IS QUITE LIKELY TO RECEIVE FURTHER IMPETUS WHEN SHE ADDS "CARMEN" TO HER REPERTOIRE. SHE ALREADY HAS ONE NEW RÔLE TO HER CREDIT THIS SEASON, LOUISE IN "JULIEN"

From her latest photograph by George Gerlach & Co., Berlin

Olcott, an excellent comedian, having been content all these years to raise his Irish tenor voice in simple songs written for simple plays and simple folk, has enough money to reestablish the credit of a National bank.

George Cohan is one of the few native entertainers who has had the courage successfully to defy his public. But he did not attempt to do so until after he was financially independent of that public. Then he could smile pleasantly at the lads who called to him to " G'wan dance!" and the folks down-stairs who applauded the request, and still refuse. Now he has created a new public for his product as a playwright.

It is generally accepted as a fact that Miss Ethel Barrymore did the best work of her career in Sir Arthur Pinero's " Mid-Channel," and yet she probably lost more admirers playing this part than through any other in her repertoire. The very idea of Ethel's throwing her beautiful self from the balcony of a building to the street below was shocking to her adoring admirers, particularly in that territory familiarly known as " the road." And even Mrs. Fiske, having achieved her reputation as a serious actress, finds it the most difficult task of her life to convince people that she can play comedy, even farce, better than ninety-five per cent of her contemporaries, which is the truth.

LAURETTE TAYLOR AS A SHOP-GIRL

For the sake of Miss Taylor's peace of mind, I hope she may be able to master the sometimes irksome responsibilities of popularity which *Peg* threatens to put upon her. But, having a Scotch ancestry, I hae me doobts. It is at least a significant fact that of the three one-act plays she presented at her series of special matinées in March the one that achieved the greatest and most instant success offered another " Peg o' My Heart " in a different setting.

This was a little play called " Happiness," and in it Miss Taylor appeared as an optimistic shop-girl who brings a $200 gown from the store in which she is employed to a wealthy parasite so completely bored with life that she has lost all interest in living. She is a daughter of wealth, and everything that money can give her she has known all her life. She has " been and been—and seen and seen " until she has become a purposeless and more or less pitiful object.

The shop-girl, by way of contrast, finds much in life to interest her. She is earning six dollars a week, and expects soon to be earning eight dollars, and she lives contentedly with her mother in a Brooklyn flat. Like *Glad* in Mrs. Burnett's " The Dawn of a To-morrow," this little girl " has her thoughts," and so it matters very little to her what her associates may say of her. They have no way of knowing that she lives in an imaginary world of her own, and no way of preventing it. Perhaps the very day the other girls call her " shabby Jennie," because she wears a four-dollar frock, she may be pretending she is a queen. And that gives her a tremendous advantage.

It is, on Miss Taylor's part, a flawless characterization. The little play's conclusion, however, is a bit trite. The world-weary lady becomes interested in the optimistic shop-girl and determines to keep her near, that she may absorb a part of her human, cheerful philosophy. When the curtain descends she is sending her car to bring the girl's mother to dinner. " Happiness," by the way, is to be expanded into a three-act play by its author, J. Hartley Manners, who is Miss Taylor's husband and, I suspect, favorite playwright.

Miss Taylor's real effort to get away from *Peg* was made with an allegory called " The Day of Dupes." It happens to be one of the first plays Mr. Manners ever wrote, and he brought it out of the trunk for this matinée, because the comedienne was eager to play its heroine—a modern Magdalene seeking reformation.

She has been the dupe of men and, she believes, the dupe of fate. Her patrons have included a politician, a financier, a man of letters, and an artist, and on the day in which she elects " to walk alone " she sends for this quartet, intending, so far as within her power lies, to square her debt with each of them. To the financier and the politician she returns the money they have advanced her. To the man of letters she hands back eloquent words of advice, which he had from time to time contributed to their mutual benefit, and to the artist she offers a new and a more spiritualized inspiration than that which he has sworn she has given him in the past.

" If your art has depended upon any inspiration that I could have given you, it is a degraded art, and it is better that it should die," she tells him. When they have gone she throws the black cloak of penitence about her drooping shoulders and walks out into the world to begin her life afresh.

THE PRICE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

It isn't only the popular stars that the price of popularity hits, either. Every now and then it strikes the man higher up. Meaning the playwright, in this instance. Consider, for example, the recent experiences of George Scarborough and Augustin MacHugh, who took the money their popularity as playwrights had won them and backed their own judgment as producers.

Mr. Scarborough you may recall as the author of "The Lure," the first of this season's early crop of red-light dramas. He made money with "The Lure"—more money than he ever had thought it was possible for him to make when he was an investigator in the secret service of the government. Later in the season a second play of his, the melodrama "At Bay," was presented, and also proved profitable.

Little wonder, then, that he should acquire confidence in himself as a judge of the kind of entertainment people prefer to see in the theater. When he wrote his third play, called "The Last Resort," he determined to stage it himself, and take the profits both as author and producer.

"The Last Resort," however, did not live up to his expectations, and, so far as the New York season is concerned at least, he lost a good part of the money he had earned with his other plays.

In the principal scene of this play three judges in the Court of Appeals permit their decision in an important case not only to be dictated, but actually to be written by a corporation attorney and party boss. "They will probably say these things couldn't happen — but they have happened," is a line of explanation on the program, and Mr. Scarborough insists that the events which he has pictured in his play are written out of his knowledge of similar situations. However that may be, "The Last Resort" lacked plausibility, and lasted but a fortnight in New York.

Augustin MacHugh is the young vaudeville actor who, two seasons ago, sold a farce called "Officer 666" to Messrs. Cohan and Harris. It is said Winchell Smith did considerable work in rearranging the material, and that the advice of Mr. Cohan, who is a past master at farce building, had something to do with the finished product. In any case, "Officer 666" was a laughing success, and Mr. MacHugh's name came to stand for something as an entertaining writer.

It was natural that his following should look to him for another farce when he announced a second play. Mr. MacHugh, however, was determined to write a serious drama this time. If he could not find a manager who was willing to produce it, he would do it himself, which he did. The title was "What Would You Do?" The decision of New York playgoers was that they would not go to see it, or, having gone, would not urge their friends to go. With the result that "What Would You Do?" also lasted but two weeks on Broadway.

Mr. MacHugh's handicap, as a judge of his own work, was similar to that of Mr. Scarborough. His play was untimely. Preaching a sermon to wicked and wasteful New Yorkers is rather an old story, and "What Would You Do?" was, in effect, no more than Mr. Walter's "Fine Feathers" rewritten.

A POPULAR POKER FARCE

Popularity of one kind and another has played fast and loose with Edward Peple since he became a playwright. He scored his first success with that pleasantly sentimental little comedy, "The Prince Chap," in 1905, but he was not heard of definitely again until 1911, when he lengthened his vaudeville sketch, "The Littlest Rebel," into a four-act melodrama and watched William and Dustin Farnum perform in it to the expressed satisfaction of large audiences in Chicago and other Western centers.

This spring, after another rest, he has come forward with what appears to be one more popular success. At least "A Pair of Sixes," a new farce from his pen, stirred the critical eulogists of the theatrical capital to a fresh burst of praise. It is a bright story of quarreling partners engaged in a profitable pill business but unable to agree as to who shall be boss. Their lawyer, accusing them of being afraid to take a gambler's chance, twits them into an agreement to adjust their quarrel with the help of two "cold" poker hands. The winner is to have sole charge of the business for one year, and the loser is to serve him in any capacity he (the winner) elects to name. And if either makes public the terms of the agreement he is to forfeit $5,000 in cash.

The hands are dealt at the conclusion of the first act, and the fun grows riotous in the second section when the winning partner appoints the loser as his butler and then invites the latter's *fiancée* to visit his home. The loser turns the tables, however, by flirting so violently with his "employer's" wife that the latter is quite willing to call the agreement off and welcome his old partner back to the pillory.

IN THE MUNSEY PICTURE GALLERY

Ruth Chatterton was visiting in Washington when she decided to become an actress. She had run up from New York, which is her native village, to spend a week or two with a girl chum who had gone on the stage and was a member of the Columbia Theater stock company. The manager of the company, seeing her in the theater, decided she was the exact type for a second ingénue part in the play he was doing the following week.

Overcoming the usual maternal objection, Miss Ruth went on, and her future was fixed. She spent the rest of the season as a member of the company, and in succeeding seasons played with stock companies in Milwaukee, and in Worcester, Massachusetts. It was not, however, until Henry Miller selected her for the rôle of the sympathetic daughter in "The Rainbow" that she scored her first pronounced success. After two seasons of that Mr. Miller decided she was ready to be featured, and presented her in "Daddy Long-legs." So enthusiastic, however, was her reception by the Chicago press and public that within a week she was promoted from "feature" to "star," a distinction with considerable difference not only in the billing but in the pay-envelope.

GERALDINE FARRAR'S SEASON

Although a protracted siege of the grippe kept Geraldine Farrar out of the casts during the early season at the Metropolitan Opera House, she has made up for it during the last few months. This most favored of American sopranos created one new rôle this season—that of *Louise* in Charpentier's "Julien," and has repeated her old successes in "Madama Butterfly" and "La Tosca." She was to do "Carmen" before long, and there are many predictions that she will, within a very short time at least, rival the popularity of the great Calvé in that picturesque rôle.

Ruth Rose, who is this season playing *Asenath* in "Joseph and His Brethren," is the daughter of Edward Everett Rose, who probably in his time has dramatized more popular novels than any other living playwright. Not that this distinction means anything to Miss Ruth, but it follows her about the country, and is frequently mentioned as an excuse for her having adopted the stage as a career. She is a pretty young woman, and fits nicely into the Biblical rôle of *Joseph's* sweetheart.

Irene Fenwick is a graduate of the chorus. As Irene Frizzel she danced and sang with the other girls in George Ade's "Peggy from Paris." She was soon advanced, however, to one of the minor parts. At the end of the season she decided she would give up acting for a time, and retired. Two years later she came back as Irene Fenwick, and since then has been determined to make a name for herself as a dramatic actress. That she has succeeded is proved by the fact that in the last three seasons she has played three leading parts—those of the scampering heroine in "The Million," the melting heroine in "Hawthorne, U. S. A.," and the smart young business woman in "Along Came Ruth," the rôle occupying her attention at the present time.

Alice Dovey is most fittingly named. She is not much larger than a good-sized pigeon, and the gentleness of her voice and manner suggest nothing more than they do the contented cooing of the dove. She has decorated many musical comedy casts, and she usually does her part to justify the success of the attraction that claims her. Just now she is one of the minor celebrities in "The Queen of the Movies."

MANAGER BRADY'S TALENTED DAUGHTER

It is said that William A. Brady has made it a point of paternal discipline to convince his daughter Alice that she should not be too proud of her success whenever she appears in a new rôle. It is related that when she made her début in "The Balkan Princess," singing one of the minor parts, "papa" stood in the wings and assured her she was doing it very badly.

She is really—barring Mrs. Brady (Grace George)—his favorite actress. Her mother, who died when Alice was a small child, was also an actress, and played leading rôles in several of Mr. Brady's early productions. Miss Alice's own career has been one of unusual success, for she not only has scored as a prima donna in most of the Gilbert & Sullivan revivals, but she has turned right around and made a success for herself in the drama. This season she has played two important rôles, those of the leading ingénue in "The Family Cupboard" and the tearful but attractive leading lady in "The Things that Count."

IRENE CASTLE'S AMBITION

Mrs. Vernon Castle, who is sharing with her elongated but graceful husband the rewards that have come to the leaders in the prevalent dance craze, announces that she is saving her money, even though Mr. Castle is not laying by his. It is her ambition, when the tango craze shall have ceased to be profitable, to take her savings and buy a home in New Rochelle, New York, whence she came, and settle down there to a quiet family life with the five or six Castle children to whom she hopes to be mother.

Mrs. Castle is the daughter of a New Rochelle physician, and she relates with much interest the sensation she created when she announced her intention of marrying Mr. Castle, at that time an obscure member of one of Lew Fields's musical plays. They later had considerable difficulty in convincing people they could dance, and were accepted in a Paris cabaret before they made any progress in America. Now they own two fashionable tango trotteries in New York, and are fairly besieged with tempting offers to appear publicly for theatrical managers, or privately for those society leaders who would lend distinction and novelty to their home entertainments.

MAUDE ADAMS'S VACATION

Maude Adams, unquestionably the most exclusive of stage stars, has from the beginning of her career, drawn a straight, true line separating her family life from her public appearances, and has never permitted it to be overstepped. But her few intimates speak of her as a most gracious hostess, and she is much beloved by all the members of her company.

Because of the success of "The Legend of Leonora" this season, Mr. Frohman put aside his plan to revive a series of the older Barrie comedies, except as to some matinées of "Peter Pan." Miss Adams's engagement at the Empire in New York will close early in May, in all probability, and she plans a vacation in Europe. It will be the first time she has been abroad in five years. Several weeks of her stay there will unquestionably be spent in one of her favorite retreats in France or Switzerland, where she literally retires from the world and thus gains the rest and quiet that no watering-place or summer resort could give her.

THE MARVEL

At evening, when I think of thee
  So far away—so very far—
Often thou seemest unto me
  The spirit of the evening star.

At midnight, when in waking dreams
  Thy sweet face woos me to repose,
Though starry, more to me it seems
  A dream—a vision of a rose.

At morning, when the rosy day
  Begins her petals to unclose,
Thy face of love—so far away—
  Is radiant star, is glowing rose.

How strange it is, I strive in vain
  Through the sweet mystery's cloud to see;
But stranger still my unearned gain,
  The marvel that thou lovest me!

Henry Austin

THE SPIDER'S PARLOR

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

AUTHOR OF "A PRINCE OF SINNERS," "THE MASTER MUMMER," "CONSPIRATORS," ETC.

BEING THE SIXTH OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF MR. STANLEY BROOKE, THE DELIBERATE DETECTIVE

BROOKE missed the sound of the typewriter as he entered her room, but, to his immense relief, Constance was there. She was sitting back in her easy-chair, her eyes were half closed, she seemed pale and tired. The windows were wide open but the air of the little room was stifling.

"Constance!" he exclaimed, "I beg your pardon, Miss Robinson — you see I am back again."

She seemed suddenly to pull herself together. The lines were still under her weary eyes, but she held herself upright and she spoke briskly.

"So I observe," she remarked. "I am sorry—"

She hesitated, looking at his dark clothes and black tie. He came over to her, dragging a chair with him.

"I am not going to try and be a hypocrite," he said. "It was an uncle whom I have seen only half a dozen times in my life, and he has left me a little money. He was eighty-one years old. Why on earth should I be sorry?"

"No reason at all that I can see," she admitted, smiling. "I suppose you have come to tell me, then, that our partnership is at an end?"

"On the contrary," he answered swiftly, "I have come to beg for a new one."

She was conscious, almost as soon as she had spoken, of the opportunity which her words had given him. She shrank a little away but he caught at her hands and held them boldly.

"Constance," he said, "you've known all the time, of course. You're horrid to me, and I haven't cared to say much before because, after all, I had only what I could earn with you and through you. I've a reserve fund to fall back upon now. Will you marry me, please, dear?"

She drew her hands firmly away.

"Most certainly and decidedly not," she declared.

Brooke sighed.

"It sounds a little uncompromising," he remarked.

"It is exactly how I feel," she assured him. "I have not the slightest desire to marry you or any one. What I've seen of married life," she went on, a little sadly, "has been quite enough to prevent my ever thinking about it for myself as long as I live."

"But surely," he pleaded, "you do not allow yourself to be influenced by one, or even two, unfortunate marriages?"

She shook her head.

"I cannot discuss it," she said. "Fortunately for me, I am one of those people who are able to take care of themselves, who can live alone and not feel the want of any one's society. You see, I am not at all the sort of girl men like. I am a little hard, a little bitter. There have been things in my life which have made me so. The world is full of girls, Mr. Brooke, who would make you excellent wives, and who are only waiting for the opportunity. Please put away all such thoughts in connection with me."

He sat in silence for a few moments.

"I wonder," he remarked, "is there anything in your life which accounts for your unnatural attitude towards matrimony?"

She sighed.

"Some day," she answered, "I may tell you — certainly not at present. Now, please, get all these foolish ideas out of your head. There is some business to talk about."

"I will talk business in five minutes," Brooke said. "Before I do so, I insist upon knowing what has happened to this room."

He looked around him wonderingly. Constance sat quite still, but her lips were quivering.

"I have got rid of a few articles of furniture which I did not require," she declared. "Nothing else has happened to it that I know of."

"Your little water-colors have gone," he pointed out, "your two bronzes, all the china from your cabinet, all the silver from that little what-not. Were you thinking of moving, or—"

"Or what?"

"Have you sold them?"

"I do not consider, Mr. Brooke," she said, "that this matter concerns you at all."

"We are partners," he objected.

"We are partners inasmuch as we divide the profits of certain of our undertakings," she replied. "We have done that, and there is an end of it."

"If we are partners in good fortune," he insisted doggedly, "we are also partners in ill fortune."

"I am not prepared to grant anything of the sort," she rejoined. "Since you are so ill-bred as to be inquisitive, I will admit that I have sold some of my things. I had a pressing claim and I had to satisfy it."

"But why on earth couldn't you telegraph me?" he exclaimed. "You knew where I was."

"Why on earth should I?" she replied.

"You know very well that what I have—"

"What you have has nothing to do with me," she declared firmly. "I have a burden to carry through life and I mean to carry it myself. What it is I have no idea of telling you—at any rate for the present. If you find out, it will be against my will. Sometimes it keeps me poor. At other times it is no trouble at all. Whatever it is, it is my affair and mine alone. Now, will you please sit quite still? I want to talk to you about something else."

Brooke kept silent with an effort.

"Very well," he muttered. "For the present, then—only for the present. You can go on."

"I suppose," she began, "I have been wasting my time the whole of the fortnight you have been away. I couldn't help it. I am going to make a confession. That down-stairs room in the Café Hollande has fascinated me. I haven't been able to keep away from it. I think what makes it the more attractive really is that they hate the sight of me there."

"The place has been thoroughly searched, hasn't it?" he interposed.

"From cellar to attic. Directly the manager was spoken to and it was hinted to him that suspicions had been aroused concerning the restaurant, he placed all his keys at the disposal of Mr. Simmons, and he insisted upon their searching every room and cross-questioning whomever they chose.

"Not a single suspicious circumstance came to light, not a single thing to connect the place with Paul of Delacher's Hotel, or with any other person. Mr. Simmons himself told me that he was sure there had been some mistake. I told him about Fritz, the man whose dead body was found in the Thames. I told him how genuinely terrified he was when he heard that we had lunched there. Mr. Simmons only shook his head. You know how obstinate he is. He had made up his mind.

"Very well, I said no more. But since then the Café Lugano has seen little of me. I have lunched in that gloomy room downstairs at the Hollande nearly every day. Sometimes I have dined there as well. They keep on charging me more and more. They bring me indifferent things to eat. They keep me waiting an unconscionable time. I say to myself 'Never again will I set foot inside this place!' and in a few hours I am back again."

"This isn't like you," he remarked, wonderingly.

"Not a bit," she admitted. "I have never believed in presentiments. I haven't cared about anything but direct methods. Yet I am going to tell you something. I know perfectly well that there are things connected with the Café Hollande which have never been discovered. Do you know what I call it to myself—the Spider's Parlor! Things go on there which no one has any idea of."

"But in what part of the place?" Brooke asked.

"I do not know," she answered, "only I feel quite sure that there is something mysterious about that half-underground room, with just those few tables and the three musicians. They are turning people away all the time up-stairs. It would be perfectly easy to add fifty more tables down-stairs, instead of which they keep it empty. The few people who are there seem either to have drifted in by accident, or to have some special interest in the place. However, there is something more to tell you."

She glanced at the clock, which was just striking four.

"To-day," she went on, "as I came out, I stopped to give something to the musicians. The man who plays the piano was the only one there. The other two had turned away for a minute. I wonder whether you remember him? He was a strange, dark-looking creature, with queer eyes."

Brooke nodded.

"I remember him perfectly."

"He seemed to have a sudden idea when I spoke to him," she went on. "There was no one within hearing. He asked me in an undertone for my address."

"The infernal cheek—" Brooke began.

Constance shook her head.

"Don't be absurd," she said quietly. "He did not ask in that sort of way. The only other two words he said were 'Four o'clock.' Now suppose you go to the door and open it."

There was a sound of knocking outside. Brooke obeyed. It was indeed the musician who stood there. He wore a long black overcoat, notwithstanding the heat of the day, and he carried a soft black hat in his hand. He stared hard at Brooke with one eye, and blinked rapidly with the other.

"Miss Robinson?" he asked.

"She is here," Brooke replied. "Come in."

The man came into the room. Constance rose to her feet.

"This gentleman," she said, indicating Brooke, "is a friend of mine. You need not hesitate to speak before him. What is it you wish to say?"

The man laid his hat upon the table.

"Young lady," he began, "I do not quite know why I spoke to you. I was beside myself this morning. They have dismissed me, those people at that rathole. I sat there thinking when you passed. You, too, have been in that place often, and I wondered, as the others wonder, for what purpose. I said to myself that we would speak with one another. Who can tell what may come of it?"

"I have nothing whatever to conceal," she told him. "I have been so often into that wretched little room at the Café Hollande because the place seems to me so mysterious, and because I am interested in unraveling queer things and visiting strange places. I have always a fancy that there are secrets almost within the reach of one's hands there."

The man leaned forward. He was English enough, and yet there was a strain of some foreign blood in him. His gestures were theatrical but natural.

"It is the truth!" he exclaimed. "There are things going on there which no one knows of. There are certain visitors who are brought with much ceremony to the little room down-stairs, and on those nights we are sent away early. What happens? Who knows? But that visitor never comes another time. He is never seen again.

"You," he went on, pointing to Brooke, "were brought down there one day, and the young lady. Nothing happened. The young lady has been often since. Yet believe me or not, as you choose, never do I remember any one else escorted down those stairs by Jean whose face I have ever seen again!"

"But there are always a few customers there," Constance objected.

"Dummies!" the musician declared. "They are creatures of the restaurant. There is barely a single genuine customer. Why should they come? The place is nearly empty. Only one or two tables are set there; it is cold and drafty, the service is slow. *Mademoiselle* is the only one from the outside world who has been there often, and I have seen them watch her—watch her from up-stairs, watch her from the other places. Sometimes I have had it in my mind to speak to her."

"Tell me," Brooke asked, "you seem to have been suspicious of this place for some time. Have you discovered anything?"

"A trifle which may not be a trifle," the musician answered. "It was only yesterday. There was a wine merchant who called. Jean complained bitterly of some wine. We could hear them upon the stairs.

"It was arranged that Jean should go into the cellars and bring up several bottles at hazard. Jean passed us, went behind the bar, opened the trap-door and stepped down. I saw him disappear with my own eyes. In a moment or two the wine merchant came down the stairs. He inquired for Monsieur Jean. I pointed to the open trap-door.

"'Ah!' he exclaimed, 'he has gone to fetch the wine. I will help him.' He hurried across the room and began to descend the steps. Presently he returned. 'There is no one there,' he declared.

"It was in the intervals of playing. I myself descended with him. The cellar was empty. We searched it everywhere. Then we both ascended. While we spoke of this thing we heard footsteps. Jean appeared with the bottles. I turned away. I heard Jean explain that he had been behind a bin in the corner, but I know better. Jean was not in the cellar at all."

"But surely it is not impossible," Brooke interposed, "that there should be another way out of the cellar?"

"There is a way for letting cases down from the street," the man replied, "but that is almost perpendicular, and Jean could not have been hidden there or gone out that way. I know a short time ago there came men who searched those cellars, searched them carefully, yard by yard. They found no other exit. It was for that they were looking. To-day I know that they were wrong. There is another exit. That is all I have to say."

"I do not quite understand, after all," Constance remarked, "why you have come to me. You have realized that I was interested in the restaurant, but is that all?"

The man took up his hat slowly.

"I know," he declared, "that you are an enemy of the place. I have seen Jean's face grow black when you have entered. I have heard orders given that you were to be served slowly and badly. I know that for some reason they are afraid of you there. Therefore, it seemed to me that, hating the place as I do, you were the person to whom I might bring the little information I have."

Brooke put his hand in his pocket.

"If a trifling loan," he suggested, "while you are out of work—"

"I shall accept it with pleasure, sir," the man replied. "And if anything should come of this—"

He wrote down his address upon a piece of paper.

"There may be other questions," he continued, "matters which have seemed to me unimportant."

"There is just one thing I should like to ask you," Constance said, as he turned to go. "Besides myself there seems to be one habitué of the place from the general public—a little man with gold glasses, who is always reading a paper. They treat him almost as rudely as they do me."

The musician nodded.

"He is a doctor, miss," he told her, "who has a surgery near. That is all I know. I have seen them look at him, also, as though they wished him somewhere else. He comes in, I think, because it is near his place. They serve him, too, badly, but he takes no notice. He reads always more than he eats. Good day, miss! Good day, sir!"

"Entirely as a matter of business," Brooke proposed, as the door closed behind their visitor, "I suggest that we dine to-night at the Café Hollande."

"It would perhaps be advisable," Constance assented.

They were met at the head of the stairs by Jean, who hurried along the crowded room towards them.

"If I could only persuade *mademoiselle,*" he begged, "to dine here! I will arrange a round table for two. Downstairs it is so *triste* and damp."

"Another time, Jean," Brooke declared. "I have been away, and we have a little matter to talk over, *mademoiselle* and I. We like the quiet down there."

Jean shrugged his shoulders. It was unaccountable. However, it must be as *mademoiselle* preferred. He escorted them down the stairs himself.

"We are having plans made," he confided to them, "for turning this into a large grill-room. It is only the kitchen accommodation which is difficult. *Mademoiselle* will like her accustomed seat?"

They decided to move farther into the corner, however, and found themselves at the next table to the little gentleman with the gold spectacles, who favored them with a bland but benevolent stare. He called Jean to him.

"Waiter," he said, in a smooth, cultivated voice, "I have dined here for two months and I have never made a complaint."

"I am glad that *monsieur* has been so well served," Jean remarked.

"I have been abominably served," was the indignant reply. "I care little for my food. I come here only because it is quiet and because I may read and because it is near my work. But even a worm will turn. I desire to inform you that your food is the worst I have ever tasted, that it reaches me half cold, that your service is abominable and your charges exorbitant. After to-night I shall look for another restaurant. It is all."

The natural instinct of the *maître d'hôtel* seemed for the moment to triumph in Jean. He started to make apologies, but the little man waved him away.

"It is my first complaint," he declared. "It is my last."

Jean departed. The little man was settling down again to his papers. He glanced for a moment, however, at Constance.

"I trust," he said, "that I have not made myself objectionable? You, madam, also have been, I believe, an habitué here. I must confess that I wonder at it."

Constance smiled.

"I certainly have not come here to dine well or cheaply," she admitted. "I think really I have come because I am fond of the unusual and because there is something about the place which rather mystifies me."

"In what way?" the little gentleman asked.

She shook her head.

"Just an idea."

The little gentleman drew his newspaper closer to him.

"Madam," he said, "I have no faith in ideas. I am a physician. Science is at once my mistress and my hobby. It provides me with all the mysteries I require. As for this place, it is nothing but a drafty, ill-managed hole. I have finished with it. Pardon me."

He plunged into his paper with the air of one who has concluded a conversation. There were only two other customers in the room—one a powerful, sunburnt man in tweed clothes, who sat with a bottle of wine in front of him and a newspaper propped up against it, dining, apparently, entirely to his satisfaction. The other had the appearance of being one of the staff. The dinner was a little better than usual, and curiously enough it was served almost precipitately.

"One would imagine," Brooke remarked, "that they wanted to get rid of us."

Constance looked around the room. The tablecloths had been removed from the other tables and there were no signs of any other diners being expected.

"What about our friend there?" she inquired, moving her head slightly towards the sunburnt man.

"A countryman or colonial," Brooke decided, "wandered in here by accident. Probably didn't care for it up-stairs because of his clothes and thick boots."

"He looks like that," she admitted.

They finished their dinner presently. There seemed to be nothing to wait for. The little doctor had lit a pipe and was reading over his coffee. The sunburnt man was leaning back in his chair, apparently thoroughly satisfied with his dinner. As they passed out, Brooke obeyed a sudden impulse and spoke to him.

"Do you mind if I take one of your matches?" he asked.

The man pushed them to him without a word. Brooke made some difficulty about striking one.

"Everything down here seems damp," he remarked. "Gives one the feeling of being half underground, doesn't it?"

The sunburnt man looked up at Brooke and frowned. Then he turned a little away, crossing his legs, and took up his paper again.

"Hadn't noticed it," he declared, shortly.

Brooke caught Constance up, smiling.

"Your friend with the red cheeks," he told her, "has about the worst manners of any man I ever knew. He seemed afraid of being spoken to."

She laughed.

"I noticed that he didn't seem to take to you," she remarked. "At any rate, he seems very well able to take care of himself."

They passed Jean, descending the stairs with a bottle of old brandy in his hand. Brooke left the place almost reluctantly.

"Well?" Constance asked.

"I suppose that fellow's all right," Brooke said thoughtfully. "The little doctor was just getting up to go as we came away. He will be the last one in the room."

"I never saw any one who looked better able to take care of himself," Constance murmured.

The night was hot, the streets were light as day. As though by common consent, they walked. At the corner of Piccadilly Circus, Brooke halted.

"What do you say to a ride on the top of a motor omnibus?" he suggested.

"It would perhaps be pleasant," she assented.

"There's one at the corner there, for Hampstead," he said. "Come."

They were crossing the road when Constance felt a light touch on her arm. She turned quickly around. Inspector Simmons of Scotland Yard was walking by her side.

"Stroke of luck, seeing you, Miss Robinson," he remarked.

"I am glad you think so," she answered. "You know Mr. Brooke, don't you?"

Mr. Simmons bit his lip.

"Of course I do. Sorry! I only caught sight of you that moment. Are you in a hurry, Miss Robinson?"

"I am never in a hurry," she replied, "if there is anything to be done."

"Will you please both step into the Monico with me, then?" he begged. "We will have some coffee. I want to show you a letter."

"Certainly," Constance agreed.

Mr. Simmons escorted her politely to the door of the restaurant. Brooke looked a little regretfully at the top of the motor omnibus, and followed. They found a small table against the wall and Mr. Simmons ordered coffee. Then he drew from his pocket a letter, which he did not, however, at once open.

"I wonder," he said, "if you have either of you heard of the Eburian Copper Mine?"

"Of course," Brooke replied. "The annual meeting is to-morrow, isn't it? They say there's going to be an awful row."

"There probably will be," Mr. Simmons assented. "I know we've orders to draft a hundred police down to the Cannon Street Hotel. Let me remind you of the facts. Miss Robinson may not know them.

"There have been six hundred thousand pounds' worth of shares issued and paid for on the strength of certain reports. A month ago there was a sensational article in the *Financial Times*, absolutely discrediting the mine. There was a fearful panic, of course, and the company sent out the greatest known mining expert—a man named Haslem—to make an independent report. He has not been allowed to send a telegram or a letter. He arrived in London secretly to-night. The meeting is to-morrow."

Brooke and Constance were both interested now. Their coffee stood before them, neglected.

"To-night," the detective continued, slowly unfolding the letter, "I was in my office when this was brought in—this with an enclosure. I will read the letter first. It seems to be from Haslem and it is written from Delacher's Hotel:

"DEAR SIR,

"I received the enclosed letter on my arrival in London this evening. I am sending it on to you as a matter of form, for I think I can take care of myself. You may know me by name. I have to give evidence at the Cannon Street Hotel to-morrow with regard to the Eburian Mine.

"Faithfully,

"JOHN HASLEM."

Brooke and Constance had exchanged swift glances.

"Delacher's Hotel!" she murmured.

"Now for the enclosure," Mr. Simmons continued. "Here it is—the usual sort of thing — plain paper, typewritten, and all the rest of it. Let me read it:

"MR. HASLEM.

"SIR,

"To-morrow you are going to give evidence which will practically ruin half-a-dozen of the most unscrupulous company promoters in London. Read the advice of a friend. Take care of yourself to-night. London is not altogether the city of safety one is apt to believe.

"FROM ONE WHO KNOWS."

"What have you done about this?" Brooke asked quickly.

"I sent a new man whom no one would recognize, to Delacher's Hotel," Mr. Simmons announced. "He did his work quite satisfactorily. Haslem arrived at about five o'clock and must have sent that note off to me very soon afterwards. He took a bedroom and asked Paul, the head porter, for some quiet place where he could dine without being noticed, as he didn't wish to be seen in London at all till next day. Paul directed him to — where do you think?"

Constance was sitting quite still. Her eyes seemed to have grown larger.

"To the Café Hollande!" she cried.

The inspector smiled a little indulgently.

"I know you have that place on the brain, Miss Robinson," he said. "Personally, as I've searched it plank by plank, I don't exactly—why, what's the matter?"

Constance was already half-way towards the door. Brooke dragged the inspector to his feet.

"Haslem was at the Café Hollande when we left," he exclaimed, "and, by Heaven, he wasn't there for nothing! Quick! We'll explain on the way."

They hurried into a taxicab.

"Look here," Brooke said, "notwithstanding your search, Mr. Simmons, there's something wrong about that place. Paul sent Dupoy there, and you know what happened to him. Haslem is another man with enemies. I tell you he was sitting down there twenty minutes ago. They'd got him."

Mr. Simmons was an unprejudiced person. To a certain extent he believed in Constance, and he believed in Brooke.

"We'll fetch him out, then, at any rate," he declared. "Is there likely to be any trouble, I wonder?"

"If so, we can deal with it," Brooke replied. "Miss Robinson can stay outside and bring in a policeman or two after us, if we don't reappear."

"Miss Robinson will do nothing of the sort," she retorted. "If this is any one's affair, it's mine."

The taxicab pulled up at the corner. They all three hurried across the pavement. The upper room was still filled with a cheerful crowd. They hastened towards the staircase. A waiter intercepted them.

"It is closed down-stairs, *monsieur,*" he announced.

Brooke flung him out of the way. They descended quickly. The band had ceased to play, half the lights were out, the doctor had left.

Only Jean was there, standing by the table at which Haslem had been sitting. There was a broken glass upon the floor, the tablecloth seemed to have been dragged sideways. Jean himself was swiftly setting things to rights.

He started and turned round as he heard footsteps. His face was suddenly almost ghastly. He clutched at the table and stared at them.

"Where is the man who was sitting at that table?" Brooke demanded.

"He has left, *monsieur,*" Jean faltered, "five minutes ago. He had had too much to drink."

Brooke glanced towards the other vacant table.

"And the doctor?" he asked.

"He left at nine o'clock, as usual, sir," Jean answered. "He never varies his time. He has patients to receive."

For one second Brooke hesitated. His first impulse was to plunge down into the cellar. Then Constance seized him by the arm.

"Quick!" she almost sobbed into his ear. "Quick!"

She tore up the stairs and they followed her. She flashed through the restaurant, through the swing doors, out into the street and turned sharply down the narrow thoroughfare past the left hand side of the building.

Brooke and Simmons were only a few yards behind. At the end of the restaurant premises stood a narrow house, on the door of which was a brass plate. Outside in the street an ambulance wagon was standing.

Constance leaned with her finger upon the bell. The man looked over from the box seat of the ambulance. He was half frightened, half angry.

"Don't do that!" he cried. "There's some one ill inside."

They took no notice of him. They heard footsteps in the hall. The door was cautiously opened by a woman dressed like a hospital nurse. They broke past her and Brooke threw open the door of the room on the left.

Haslem was there, unconscious, breathing heavily, stretched out on what seemed to be an operating table. The little doctor with the gold spectacles, dressed now in a long linen smock, turned and faced them. Outside, they could hear the ambulance galloping away.

"Drop that knife," Brooke shouted, "or, by Heaven, I'll wring your neck!"

The knife slipped from the man's fingers. For a moment there was silence. A draft was blowing through the room. Brooke glanced away for a single second; a door in the wall stood a little ajar.

"Take that fellow, Simmons," Brooke ordered. "We must get a doctor at once."

The little man with the gold glasses beamed upon them.

"My friends from the Café Hollande!" he remarked. "After all, then, the young lady has wits. Pardon!"

His fingers flashed from his waistcoat pocket to his mouth. He waved Brooke away as he sank into an easy-chair.

"Quite unnecessary," he murmured. "I shall be dead within five minutes. Another martyr to the cause of science! I never could resist these little affairs. One learned so much."

II

Mr. Haslem was able, after all, to give his evidence at the Cannon Street Hotel on the following day, but would-be lunchers at the Café Hollande were disappointed. The doors of the restaurant were closed, without any reason with which the public was ever made aware other than the painfully sudden death of the proprietor, and Jean — his chief *maître d'hôtel*.

The disappearance of Paul was wrapped in mystery. He received a telephone message late in the evening and strolled away from the hotel in his full uniform a few minutes later. When the police arrived, he was not to be found. His escape was one of those episodes not mentioned by persons of tact before Inspector Simmons.

Brooke and Constance stood outside the restaurant the next morning and watched the locked doors with complete satisfaction.

"At last," she sighed, "I can go back to my dear little café. Already I am longing for one of Charles's omelettes."

"On this occasion only," Brooke started to plead.

"Very well," she acceded, "you may come."

ON GETTING RICH QUICK

BY FRANK X. FINNEGAN

I LIKE to read the stock-market reports in the newspapers. The figures sound so alluring. It looks like such a perfectly simple way to get rich. One wonders why anybody continues to work for a living. All you need do is pick out some good, lively stock, buy a few thousand shares at 45 and sell out at about 110.

The most alluring of all to me are gold-mine stocks. The very thought of getting into that business makes you jump. And getting in on the ground floor! That's where you always get in when you buy mining stocks.

A friend of mine named Boggs came to me on tiptoe a few years ago and whispered that he and some others had discovered a gold-mine. It was a dead secret. No one but a few of us insiders was to know anything about it. I was sworn to silence. It was wonderfully exciting.

Boggs told me they had found the mine in a lonesome spot away out West. Hitherto it had produced nothing more nourishing than scorpions and a poor quality of sage-brush. His one fear was the big financiers on East. It was to be kept from them at all hazards. If they heard of it they might burst into the company's office, force their money on the terrified treasurer, and escape with a majority of the stock. Boggs said they were quite equal to it. He called them the buccaneers of Wall Street.

I bought my shares after dark. Boggs brought them to the house like a conspirator. He was pale and trembling with excitement. I shooed the family into the basement until the transaction was over. I was determined no leak should be laid at my door. When he was gone with my money I settled happily into my place in the wealthy class and kept an eager eye out for the postman. I expected dividends almost any minute.

A few months later Boggs came around one night and mysteriously beckoned me into the hallway. Standing in the deep shadow of the mortgage, he whispered that work was about to begin at our mine. The earth was to yield us up its treasures. First, however, there was a slight formality to be observed. It was an assessment on all the stockholders.

He explained that it was necessary to buy a bucket to haul the gold to the surface, and the stockholders would have to pay for it. This sounded reasonable enough. I couldn't expect any one else to pay for the bucket that was to make me rich. Certainly not. I paid my assessment cheerfully. I even urged Boggs to take half a dollar more and get the best bucket in the market. There is no sense in being cheap in a matter of that kind.

After a year or so I got a neatly printed report about our mine. It fairly oozed figures. I got dizzy trying to discover what they were all about. Most of them concerned construction work. That's where the money goes in mining. It must be frightfully expensive. I had no idea they could dig so far without finding gold. In fact, I thought they could go right ahead and get the gold up when they bought the bucket. But it's not as simple as that. Far from it. Why, the report showed as plain as day that we were putting money *into* our mine instead of taking it out. I don't pretend to understand it.

The next I heard from the optimistic Boggs was by letter. It was typewritten and manifolded. I presume he was too busy at the mine to come around and see me. In the letter he regretted that progress at the mine had been rather slow, but he assured me the gold was there all right. Stacks of it. He had an expert mining engineer tell him so at one hundred and fifty dollars a day. He told him for twenty-seven days. I didn't quite see the necessity of that. Boggs had told *me* a year before that the gold was there and I hadn't even given him a cigar.

He went on to say that in order to get at the gold another assessment was necessary. One of the hoops had fallen off the bucket and the rope had worn out. Construction work was at a standstill. Our miner would strike and leave us in the lurch if the assessment were not paid immediately. Boggs called it safeguarding my investment.

During the next few months I safeguarded it four times. On each occasion it was on the point of collapse, and only prompt action saved it. A day later all would have been lost. Boggs assured me of it almost tearfully. He was much affected.

But he showed a strange reluctance to talking about dividends. Whenever I brought that subject up he quoted statistics. They were all about other mines. The Calumet and Hecla, for instance, and the Comstock Lode. Interesting in their way, of course. But it always struck me as slightly irrelevant.

I now regard my mining stock as one of my permanent investments. Friend Boggs continued to send me voluminous reports on the construction work. It progressed by leaps and bounds. So did the assessments. Latterly I think they used the bucket to lower money into the mine. This was not mentioned in the reports, and I may be wrong. Possibly they just dumped it in at the mouth of the shaft.

In the course of time they began to discover things in the mine. Dips and spurs and angles. Also drifts and fissures. Everything but gold. Being in on the ground floor, I learned these things speedily. It's a great advantage.

The latest news from the scene of my future wealth has set my mind wholly at rest. I need worry no longer about our mine being gobbled up by the buccaneers of Wall Street. At last it is well guarded. I have just received a postal card from Boggs saying it is in the hands of the sheriff.

HOME-COMING

Twilight, the nesting note of birds,
The sound of footsteps on the village street,
A creaking gate, a swinging door, soft words:
And all the joy of night and morning meet.

Donald McLeod Lay

THE SHOP

WE have done rather well with this magazine since we reorganized it a few months ago and began publishing a complete novel in each issue. It has already gained more than one hundred and fifty thousand in circulation, and this gain is made up of steady increases month after month in its sales.

This is very good evidence that in THE MUNSEY of to-day you find the kind of magazine you want. If it were not so you wouldn't buy it. There is no reason why you should buy it except you want it. We do not bribe you to buy it. We offer nothing but the magazine itself. We have no schemes or tricks for swelling circulation, and no agents or canvassers anywhere in the wide world importuning people to subscribe to the magazine. We do not club it through subscription agents and do not sell it, as many publications are sold, on the instalment plan in conjunction with books and other merchandise.

The circulation of THE MUNSEY is purely and wholly spontaneous; it must live on its merits or die on its defects. With a magazine so circulated we can readily tell whether we are giving you what you want or not. It is an accurate barometer of public taste so far as concerns likes and dislikes. It tells us nothing more, but this is something, a point to work from.

I may have said some of this to you before in these talks, but I haven't said it to our new readers—to our hundred and fifty thousand new readers. Anyway, it won't do you any harm—you the old readers of this magazine—to get a fresh realization of the difference between a bargain counter circulation and a circulation made up of spontaneous purchases.

It is no trick at all to go out and buy a circulation through clubbing, premiums, bargain counter methods, or the instalment plan. But subscriptions got in this way don't mean anything. They furnish no test of the standing of a publication with the public, no guide to editors as to whether or not they are giving the people what they want.

Voluntary purchasers of a magazine mean something to a magazine, mean good will, substantiality, real worth. Bargain counter circulation means nothing except big figures on which to get advertising, and on this to recoup for the losses on a circulation that is little better than given away.

* * * * *

I have not worked on this theory. My publications, THE MUNSEY and all the others, have always been independent of the advertiser. That is to say, if they had not carried one line of advertising they would have shown a margin of profit from circulation receipts and this, to my way of thinking, is the right theory of conducting a periodical publishing business—the only independent way to do it.

I do not believe and never have believed in making my magazines mere vehicles for advertising. As a matter of fact, the advertising carried in periodicals is the most overrated thing in the world as a revenue producer—actual net revenue.

It costs something to get advertising, with a corps of advertising solicitors covering the country, with commissions to advertising agents, with the expense of typesetting, electrotyping, paper, printing, binding, bundling, postage, free copies to advertisers, to agents, bookkeeping, correspondence, and many other overhead charges. When all these costs have been deducted from the gross revenue, the net figures are not so alluring as they look to be, written in the sky.

I should not, however, wish to give the

impression here that advertising in a magazine is not desirable. IT IS DESIRABLE BOTH FOR WHATEVER MEASURE OF PROFIT THERE IS IN IT AND FOR ITS VALUE TO THE MAGAZINE ITSELF, ITS VALUE TO READERS.

The advertising pages of a magazine keep you in touch with things—keep you informed concerning inventions, developments, improvements that have to do with your living. It is very much worth your while to have these facts put before you from month to month and to read them seriously with a view to the benefit you will get from them.

They keep you informed on the prices of things, guide you in your purchases and enable you to know whether you are getting the latest, most up to date things or not. They tell you of what is new in architecture, decorating, and furnishing, and tell you what is new in supplies for the table, in dress, in headwear, in footwear, what is new in inventions, in science, in art and in agriculture.

I have often heard men rail at the advertising pages of a magazine, not realizing the valuable information these advertising pages contained for them.

No magazine could be as valuable to the public without its advertising pages as with them. They furnish a phase of information and reading that the magazine itself cannot furnish, but the advertising should be INCIDENTAL TO THE MAGAZINE, NOT THE PURPOSE OF IT. To make it clearer, the periodical that isn't independent of advertising, that gets little net revenue out of its circulation, expecting from advertising revenue to make good its losses, is primarily a vehicle for carrying advertising. But for this revenue from advertising such publications would cease to exist.

On the other hand, the periodical that is independent of advertising revenue, independent by reason of the legitimate revenue it gets from circulation, occupies a substantial ground and is in the broadest and fullest sense of the word doing business on legitimate lines.

Nothing has so damned the publishing business as bargain counter methods in circulation getting. It is the vast aggregate of these advertising vehicles or semi-advertising vehicles that has got the publishing business in bad with the Post Office Department, which claims that the government is losing too much money annually on the transportation of periodicals at the second class mail rate.

Readers who kick at advertising pages have good ground for doing so when magazines are overloaded and grotesquely interlarded with advertising. If the entire periodical business of the country were conducted on sound business lines, wherein periodicals were independent of advertising, then they would have no occasion for carrying an excessive quantity of advertising, and it were well if all publications were prohibited from carrying an amount of advertising in excess of say one-third of their reading space.

Such a regulation on the part of the Post Office Department would go very far towards legitimatizing the publishing business and removing the objection of the Department. Under such a ruling publications would not be sold for a song or practically given away. Bargain counter methods would disappear.

* * * * *

But just now there is not much occasion for kicking because of too large a proportion of advertising in magazines as a whole. Up to a few years ago the magazines of standard shape had a great vogue with advertisers, and then advertisers suddenly swung over to the large page flat periodicals, where in great measure they remain to-day.

The vogue with advertisers for big display, bigger display than they could get in a standard magazine page, resulted in a number of magazines changing over to what is known technically as the flats. Among these are *The American* and *The Metropolitan Magazines* of New York, *Maclean's Magazine* of Toronto, and I dare say a good many others scattered throughout the country. Personally, I doubt the wisdom of these changes, though I know nothing about the result of the changes.

I doubt the wisdom of the changes for the reason that the flat publication, with advertising interlarded in its reading pages, is not as satisfactory to the reader as the compact, book shaped magazine, and in the last analysis it is the reader that publishers should keep in mind, not the advertiser. The periodicals that will live, or are more likely to live than others, are those that are published for the reader, not the advertiser.

* * * * *

There is always a reason for everything, and the reason for the craze for big display in advertising is perhaps due more than anything else to our new automobile industry. The automobile business, as you all know, sprang up in a night, as it were, and developed into astounding proportions. Its magnitude, as a whole, in all its bearings and ramifications, was simply dazzling. This new enterprise, with its tires and its multitudinous makes of cars, and with all its accessories, suddenly filled the periodicals of the country with advertising.

And all manufacturers tried to outdo the others of their line, with the result that the limit of space in a standard size magazine page or even in two opposite pages in no way measured up to their fancied requirements—these men who were doing big things and springing a new sensation every minute. So they flocked to the flats and took pages and double pages. Great big spreads, with great big pictures, and dominated the publications. COST! WELL, IT DIDN'T MATTER WHAT IT COST, THE IMPRESSION WAS THE THING.

There is an old saying in the advertising business that advertisers are like sheep, and that all follow the leader. And so the advertisers in other fields followed the automobile men to the flats and flared out into big space advertisers. There may be a better reason, there may be several reasons for this swing to the flats, but you have here my analysis of the change, and I think it is pretty nearly right.

Twenty years ago there were few full page advertisers in the standard magazines. A quarter page advertiser was a big advertiser. The rank and file of the advertisements ran from half an inch to two or three inches, and the advertisers of that day got paying results, though the rate per line for their small ads was higher.

May it not be that we have gone mad in these days of extravagance in our craze for a great splash in our advertising? May it not be that more attention given to concrete, lucid writing and less to great big pictures, cost taken into account, would pay us much better? I am convinced that it would. I am convinced that our extravagance, the extravagance of the times, has led us into wasteful and unwarranted methods in our advertising campaigns. Wouldn't it be well for advertisers to get back in part to the methods of our daddies?

It is a very thrilling thing I know for a man to see himself spread over a great big page or two pages of a great big page publication, but I am not so sure that it is the wisest expenditure of his money. In my judgment, the advertiser spends his money to much better purpose when he tells his story clearly and effectively in a small space, a page, half or quarter page, of a magazine of standard shape than when he spends four or five or ten times as much to tell the same story in a great big spread on a great big page or in double pages. Advertising, to get the best results, must of course be bold enough not to look skimpy and mean, bold enough to be easily read and understood, but it is not necessary to tell the story in a scream.

* * * * *

There are many great fortunes in America and many thriving enterprises that came about from magazine advertising. No periodicals ever had a greater vogue with advertisers for a stretch of twenty years than the standard magazines. The great big volume in magazine advertising came in with the establishment of THE MUNSEY, with its then astounding circulation and the other great big magazine circulations that followed. It cannot be that the advertisers who crowded the advertising pages of magazines for twenty years spent their money unwisely or to no purpose, and it cannot be that the advertising agents of the country, keen, clever men in advertising affairs, did not know their job, and that all the while, for two decades, they were wasting their customers' money.

Flocking to the flats was more or less of a fad, and a fad that I fancy has cost many advertisers dearly. Everything is relative in business, as well as in life. An advertisement in a flat occupying a space of four inches single column, makes a poor showing beside the great big spreads. But in a magazine, four inches make a quarter of a page, and a quarter page advertisement makes a very respectable showing beside a full magazine page advertisement.

For the money expended there is no

medium that gives the general advertiser so much impressive, effective publicity as the magazine of standard shape.

By reason of its book shape, it lends itself to greatest economy. This is true both because of the cost, due to the small page, and because of the longevity of the advertisement, the length of life of the magazine, book that it is. It is kept on the library table a month, two months, or many months, and sometimes the life of these magazines is measured by years. The more compact a periodical, the nearer it comes to being a book, the longer its life, and the longer the life of the periodical, the more value the advertising.

That I am an interested party so far as concerns the standard type of magazine is certain. But I don't believe this fact influences my judgment. To put it in another way. I would much prefer telling my story to ten million readers through an effective advertisement in a magazine than to tell it to one million readers through a megaphone, or the big spread — the cost being the same in each case.

If, in this analysis, I am right, advertisers will gradually return to the standard magazines. This perhaps will not come about in a rush, but eventually it will have to come about. The thing that is right is bound to triumph in the end.

I don't know whether you will be interested in this talk or not. To tell you the truth, I had no thought of wandering at such length in the field of circulation and advertising. But the more colloquial and spontaneous these shop talks are, the more worth while they are as shop talks. Careful and precise writing wouldn't fit them at all. Anyway, this view of the matter gives me an excuse for being natural and talking to you without regard to form or style, quite the same as I would talk if you were in my office or if we were enjoying an after-dinner cigar together between sips of coffee.

* * * * *

Bob Davis was talking with me yesterday about the surprising number of new authors we have put on the map since we began the publication of our complete novels. Here they are:

HARRIS DICKSON, CHARLES NEVILLE BUCK,
P. G. WODEHOUSE, FRANK L. PACKARD,
A. HAMILTON-GIBBS.

"The Kangaroo," by Harris Dickson, was immediately seized upon by the moving picture men and has been converted into what is regarded as one of the finest American historical motion picture dramas ever produced.

"The Little Nugget," by P. G. Wodehouse, brought a new humorist to the attention of American readers. Its appearance in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE resulted in its immediate book publication, both in England and America, and it is now being dramatized for the fall theatrical season. Mr. Wodehouse is the author of "The White Hope," the full book length novel which appears in this issue of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.

The publication of "The Hour of Conflict" in THE MUNSEY at once put its author, A. Hamilton-Gibbs, on the map and established him as a book writer of real talent. "The Hour of Conflict" was grabbed for book publication instantly on its appearance in THE MUNSEY, and is now on sale both in England and America.

The Shuberts, the theatrical managers, pounced upon "The Battle Cry," by Charles Neville Buck, as soon as it appeared in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE and secured the dramatic rights for a production that will be made in New York this fall. The merits of the novel revealed a delightful story teller to the American public, thus putting Mr. Buck on the map of American authors.

No man among these new authors occupies a bigger space on the map than Frank L. Packard, whose "Miracle Man," published in the February MUNSEY, made a great hit. George M. Cohan, than whom there is no cleverer playwright, and himself a clever actor, got in first on "The Miracle Man," securing the dramatic rights, and is now at work converting the book into a play for production in the autumn. Concerning "The Miracle Man," Mr. Cohan wrote to the author this comment on the story:

> My only hope is that I will come as near writing a big play as you have a big novel.

Dickson, Wodehouse, Gibbs, Buck and Packard are all new men, who probably would not have made much of a dent in the literary world up to this time, if any at all, had it not been for MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, with its wide circulation and complete novel publication. The way MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE is bringing out and aging authors beats anything that ever happened in the publishing world. When this magazine stands sponsor to an author and introduces him to the reading public it means that he has arrived as a literary man, and that overnight, as it were, he has secured a place of public recognition as a writer.

Louis Joseph Vance had been before the public a number of years when his story, "The Lone Wolf," appeared in the March issue of THE MUNSEY. Nothing, however, ever did so much towards putting Vance on the map in a big way as the wide publicity we gave "The Lone Wolf." The merits of the story as a dramatic tale may be judged from the fact that William A. Brady, the theatrical manager, contracted for both its dramatic and moving picture rights within three days after its appearance in THE MUNSEY. This story has also been sold for book publication and will appear this fall.

* * * * *

This all goes to sustain what I said to you in The Shop last month, and what I have said to you on other occasions, namely, that I am at a loss to understand why more people do not go in for fiction writing. The ranks of newspaper writers and clergymen and actors and actresses should be able to turn out any number of clever writers, and a handsome percentage of great talent, perhaps even genius.

The reason I mention these classifications is that the training lends itself to literary work. Newspaper writers learn the power of expression, the way to handle words, and to handle them effectively, and they learn a good deal more. They learn how to work, become students of the world, and the things in it. With imagination and such a training, the newspaper writer is in line for literary work.

The clergyman is a student, a polished, effective, dramatic writer. With his skill, and his knowledge of human nature, his sense of refinement and delicacy, he is primarily equipped for literary achievement. Imagination he must have for creative work. Without imagination it is folly to undertake it. Fiction that sells must have a story in it, and must be dramatically told, and the more gracefully and charmingly told, of course the better. And so, too, the purer and sweeter and more refined the story, with a substratum of strength and power, the greater will be its success and the greater the achievement of its author.

But of these three callings I am inclined to think that the stage best lends itself to dramatic fiction. The actor lives in a dramatic atmosphere, sees everything from a dramatic point of view. Dramatic effects eventually become the fiber of his fiber, his whole life. Then, too, he is dealing with letters, rehearsing plays, memorizing the brain work of men of talent, and thus he takes on something of the power of expression and the refinement of culture. Again, the actor has all kinds of time on his hands. He is occupied only a few hours a day in the working season, and in the vacation season he has months of idleness. In view, therefore, of the nature of the actor's work and the measure of his leisure, he, it seems to me, is better equipped to become a fiction writer than the man of any other calling. Moreover, it is to be presumed that the actor who counts for anything has some inherent dramatic talent, otherwise he would not be on the stage.

Of course, it by no means follows that writers should not come from all callings in life, the farm, the workshop, the mercantile establishment, the sea, the plains, and the wilds. The main thing is to have imagination and dramatic expression, and to be able to tell a story, and sometimes we find the best story tellers where we least expect to see them. The army and navy have at one time and another furnished many good writers, and it is perfectly logical that they should do so. These men have much spare time on their hands and have lived and know what living means.

If this little free-hand talk about writing and writers serves to encourage some man or woman, or some number of men or women, in journalism, in the pulpit, or on the stage, or in the wider world, to produce some creative work that will mean a bigger and fuller life to them, I shall be very glad.

FRANK A. MUNSEY

THE WHITE HOPE*

A NOVEL—COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

BY P. G. WODEHOUSE

AUTHOR OF "A GENTLEMAN OF LEISURE," "THE LITTLE NUGGET,"
"THE PRINCE AND BETTY," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. M. ASHE

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER I

A PAWN OF FATE

MRS. LORA DELANE PORTER dismissed the hireling who had brought her automobile around from the garage and seated herself at the wheel. It was her habit to refresh her mind and improve her health by a daily drive between the hours of two and four in the afternoon.

The world knows little of its greatest women, and it is possible that Mrs. Porter's name is not familiar to you. If this is the case, I am pained, but not surprised. It happens only too often that the uplifter of the public mind is balked by a disinclination on the part of the public mind to meet him or her half-way. The uplifter does his share. He produces the uplifting book. But the public, instead of standing still to be uplifted, wanders off to browse on colored supplements and magazine stories.

If you are ignorant of Lora Delane Porter's books that is your affair. Perhaps you are more to be pitied than censured. Nature probably gave you the wrong shape of forehead. Mrs. Porter herself would have put it down to some atavistic tendency or prenatal influence. She put most things down to that. She blamed nearly all the defects of the modern world, from weak intellects to ingrowing toe-nails, on long-dead ladies and gentlemen who, safe in the family vault, imagined that they had established their alibi. She subpoenaed grandfathers and even great-grandfathers to give evidence to show that the reason Twentieth-Century Willie squinted or had to spend his winters in Arizona was their own shocking health 'way back in the days beyond recall.

Mrs. Porter's mind worked backward and forward. She had one eye on the past, the other on the future. If she was strong on heredity, she was stronger on the future of the race. Most of her published works dealt with this subject. A careful perusal of them would have enabled the rising generation to select its ideal wife or husband with perfect ease, and, in the event of Heaven blessing the union, her little volume, entitled "The Hygienic Care of the Baby," which was all about germs and how to avoid them, would have insured the continuance of the direct succession.

Unfortunately, the rising generation did not seem disposed to a careful perusal of anything except the baseball scores and the beauty hints in the Sunday papers, and Mrs. Porter's public was small. In fact, her only real disciple, as she sometimes told herself in her rare moods of discouragement, was her niece, Ruth Bannister, daughter of John Bannister, the millionaire. It was not so long ago, she reflected with pride, that she had induced Ruth to refuse to marry Basil Milbank—a considerable feat, he being a young man of remarkable

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personal attractions and a great match in every way. Mrs. Porter's objection to him was that his father had died believing to the last that he was a teapot.

There is nothing evil or degrading in believing oneself a teapot, but it argues a certain inaccuracy of the thought processes; and Mrs. Porter had used all her influence with Ruth to make her reject Basil. It was her success that first showed her how great that influence was. She had come now to look on Ruth's destiny as something for which she was personally responsible—a fact which was noted and resented by others, in particular Ruth's brother Bailey, who regarded his aunt with a dislike and suspicion akin to that which a stray dog feels toward the boy who saunters toward him with a tin can in his hand.

To Bailey his strong-minded relative was a perpetual menace, a sort of perambulating yellow peril, and the fact that she often alluded to him as a worm consolidated his distaste for her.

Mrs. Porter released the clutch and set out on her drive. She rarely had a settled route for these outings of hers, preferring to zigzag about New York, livening up the great city at random. She always drove herself and, having, like a good suffragist, a contempt for male prohibitions, took an honest pleasure in exceeding a man-made speed limit.

One hesitates to apply the term " joy-rider " to so eminent a leader of contemporary thought as the authoress of " The Dawn of Better Things," " Principles of Selection," and " What of To-morrow?" but candor compels the admission that she was a somewhat reckless driver. Perhaps it was due to some atavistic tendency. One of her ancestors may have been a Roman charioteer or a coach-racing maniac of the Regency days. At any rate, after a hard morning's work on her new book she felt that her mind needed cooling, and found that the rush of air against her face effected this satisfactorily. The greater the rush, the quicker the cooling. However, as the alert inhabitants of Manhattan Island, a hardy race trained from infancy to dodge taxicabs and ambulance wagons, had always removed themselves from her path with their usual agility, she had never yet had an accident.

But then she had never yet met George Pennicut. And George, pawn of fate, was even now waiting round the corner to upset her record.

George, man of all work to Kirk Winfield, one of the youngest and least efficient of New York's artist colony, was English. He had been in America some little time, but not long enough to accustom his rather unreceptive mind to the fact that, whereas in his native land vehicles kept to the left, in the country of his adoption they kept to the right; and it was still his boneheaded practise, when stepping off the sidewalk, to keep a wary lookout in precisely the wrong direction.

The only problem with regard to such a man is who will get him first. Fate had decided that it should be Lora Delane Porter.

To-day Mrs. Porter, having circled the park in rapid time, turned her car down Central Park West. She was feeling much refreshed by the pleasant air. She was conscious of a glow of benevolence toward her species, not excluding even the young couple she had almost reduced to mincemeat in the neighborhood of Ninety-Seventh Street. They had annoyed her extremely at the time of their meeting by occupying till the last possible moment a part of the road which she wanted herself.

On reaching Sixty-First Street she found her way blocked by a lumbering delivery wagon. She followed it slowly for a while; then, growing tired of being merely a unit in a procession, tugged at the steering-wheel, and turned to the right.

George Pennicut, his anxious eyes raking the middle distance—as usual, in the wrong direction—had just stepped off the curb. He received the automobile in the small of the back, uttered a yell of surprise and dismay, performed a few improvised Texas Tommy steps, and fell in a heap.

In a situation which might have stimulated another to fervid speech, George Pennicut contented himself with saying " Goo!" He was a man of few words.

Mrs. Porter stopped the car. From all points of the compass citizens began to assemble, many swallowing their chewing-gum in their excitement. One, a devout believer in the inscrutable ways of Providence, told a friend as he ran that only two minutes before he had almost robbed himself of this spectacle by going into a moving-picture palace.

Mrs. Porter was annoyed. She had never run over anything before except a few chickens, and she regarded the incident as a blot on her escutcheon. She was incensed with this idiot who had flung himself before her car, not reflecting in her heat that he probably had a prenatal tendency to this sort of thing inherited from some ancestor who had played " last across " in front of hansom cabs in the streets of London.

She bent over George and passed experienced hands over his portly form. For this remarkable woman was as competent at first aid as at everything else. The citizens gathered silently round in a circle.

" It was your fault," she said to her victim severely. " I accept no liability whatever. I did not run into you. You ran into me. I have a good mind to have you arrested for attempted suicide."

This aspect of the affair had not struck Mr. Pennicut. Presented to him in these simple words, it checked the recriminatory speech which, his mind having recovered to some extent from the first shock of the meeting, he had intended to deliver. He swallowed his words, awed. He felt dazed and helpless. Mrs. Porter had that effect upon men.

Some more citizens arrived.

" No bones broken," reported Mrs. Porter, concluding her examination. " You are exceedingly fortunate. You have a few bruises, and one knee is slightly wrenched. Nothing to signify. More frightened than hurt. Where do you live?"

" There," said George meekly.

" Where?"

" Them studios."

" No. 90?"

" Yes, ma'am." George's voice was that of a crushed worm.

" Are you an artist?"

" No, ma'am. I'm Mr. Winfield's man."

" Whose?"

" Mr. Winfield's, ma'am."

" Is he in?"

" Yes, ma'am."

" I'll fetch him. And if the policeman comes along and wants to know why you're lying there, mind you, tell him the truth, that you ran into me."

" Yes, ma'am."

" Very well. Don't forget."

" No, ma'am."

She crossed the street and rang the bell over which was a card bearing the name " Kirk Winfield." Mr. Pennicut watched her in silence.

Mrs. Porter pressed the button a second time. Somebody came at a leisurely pace down the passage, whistling cheerfully. The door opened.

It did not often happen to Lora Delane Porter to feel insignificant, least of all in the presence of the opposite sex. She had well-defined views upon man. Yet, in the interval which elapsed between the opening of the door and her first words, a certain sensation of smallness overcame her.

The man who had opened the door was not, judged by any standard of regularity of features, handsome. He had a rather boyish face, pleasant eyes set wide apart, and a friendly mouth. He was rather an out size in young men, and as he stood there he seemed to fill the doorway.

It was this sense of bigness that he conveyed, his cleanness, his magnificent fitness, that for the moment overcame Mrs. Porter. Physical fitness was her gospel. She stared at him in silent appreciation.

To the young man, however, her forceful gaze did not convey this quality. She seemed to him to be looking as if she had caught him in the act of endeavoring to snatch her purse. He had been thrown a little off his balance by the encounter.

Resource in moments of crisis is largely a matter of preparedness, and a man who, having opened his door in the expectation of seeing a ginger-haired, bow-legged, grinning George Pennicut, is confronted by a masterful woman with eyes like gimlets, may be excused for not guessing that her piercing stare is an expression of admiration and respect.

Mrs. Porter broke the silence. It was ever her way to come swiftly to the matter in hand.

" Mr. Kirk Winfield?"

" Yes."

" Have you in your employment a red-haired, congenital idiot who ambles about New York in an absent-minded way, as if he were on a desert island? The man I refer to is a short, stout Englishman, clean-shaven, dressed in black."

" That sounds like George Pennicut."

" I have no doubt that that is his name. I did not inquire. It did not interest me. My name is Mrs. Lora Delane Porter. This man of yours has just run into my automobile."

" I beg your pardon?"

" I cannot put it more lucidly. I was driving along the street when this weak-minded person flung himself in front of my car. He is out there now. Kindly come and help him in."

"Is he hurt?"

"More frightened than hurt. I have examined him. His left knee appears to be slightly wrenched."

Kirk Winfield passed a hand over his forehead and followed her. Like George, he found Mrs. Porter a trifle overwhelming.

Out in the street George Pennicut, now the center of quite a substantial section of the Four Million, was causing a granite-faced policeman to think that the age of miracles had returned by informing him that the accident had been his fault and no other's. He greeted the relief-party with a wan grin.

"Just broke my leg, sir," he announced to Kirk.

"You have done nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Porter. "You have wrenched your knee very slightly. Have you explained to the policeman that it was entirely your fault?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"That's right. Always speak the truth."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Mr. Winfield will help you indoors."

"Thank you, ma'am."

She turned to Kirk.

"Now, Mr. Winfield."

Kirk bent over the victim, gripped him, and lifted him like a baby.

"He's got his," observed one interested spectator.

"I should worry!" agreed another. "All broken up."

"Nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Porter severely. "The man is hardly hurt at all. Be more accurate in your remarks."

She eyed the speaker sternly. He wilted.

"Yes, ma'am," he mumbled sheepishly.

The policeman, with that lionlike courage which makes the New York constabulary what it is, endeavored to assert himself at this point.

"Hey!" he boomed.

Mrs. Porter turned her gaze upon him, her cold, steely gaze.

"I beg your pardon?"

"This won't do, ma'am. I've me report to make. How did this happen?"

"You have already been informed. The man ran into my automobile."

"But—"

"I shall not charge him."

She turned and followed Kirk.

"But, say—" The policeman's voice was now almost plaintive.

Mrs. Porter ignored him and disappeared into the house. The policeman, having gulped several times in a disconsolate way, relieved his feelings by dispersing the crowd with well-directed prods of his locust stick. A small boy who lingered, squeezing the automobile's hooter, in a sort of trance he kicked. The boy vanished. The crowd melted. The policeman walked slowly toward Ninth Avenue. Peace reigned in the street.

"Put him to bed," said Mrs. Porter, as Kirk laid his burden on a couch in the studio. "You seem exceedingly muscular, Mr. Winfield. I noticed that you carried him without an effort. He is a stout man, too. Grossly out of condition, like ninety-nine per cent of men to-day."

"I'm not so young as I was, ma'am," protested George. "When I was in the harmy I was a fine figure of a man."

"The more shame to you that you have allowed yourself to deteriorate," commented Mrs. Porter. "Beer?"

A grateful smile irradiated George's face.

"Thank you, ma'am. It's very kind of you, ma'am. I don't mind if I do."

"The man appears a perfect imbecile," said Mrs. Porter, turning abruptly to Kirk. "I ask him if he attributes his physical decay to beer and he babbles."

"I think he thought you were offering him a drink," suggested Kirk. "As a matter of fact, a little brandy wouldn't hurt him, after the shock he has had."

"On no account. The worst thing possible."

"This isn't your lucky day, George," said Kirk. "Well, I guess I'll phone to the doctor."

"Quite unnecessary."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Entirely unnecessary. I have made an examination. There is practically nothing the matter with the man. Put him to bed, and let him sponge his knee with warm water."

"Are you a doctor, Mrs. Porter?"

"I have studied first aid."

"Well, I think, if you don't mind, I should like to have your opinion confirmed."

This was rank mutiny. Mrs. Porter stared haughtily at Kirk. He met her gaze with determination.

"As you please," she snapped.

"Thank you," said Kirk. "I don't want to take any risks with George. I couldn't afford to lose him. There aren't any more like him: they've mislaid the pattern."

He went to the telephone.

Mrs. Porter watched him narrowly. She was more than ever impressed by the perfection of his physique. She appraised his voice as he spoke to the doctor. It gave evidence of excellent lungs. He was a wonderfully perfect physical specimen.

An idea concerning this young man came into her mind, startling as all great ideas are at their birth. The older it grew, the more she approved of it. She decided to put a few questions to him. She had a habit of questioning people, and it never occurred to her that they might resent it. If it had occurred to her, she would have done it just the same. She was like that.

"Mr. Winfield."

"Yes?"

"I should like to ask you a few questions."

This woman delighted Kirk.

"Please do," he said.

Mrs. Porter scanned him closely.

"You are an extraordinarily healthy man, to all appearances. Have you ever suffered from bad health?"

"Measles."

"Immaterial."

"Very unpleasant, though."

"Nothing else?"

"Mumps."

"Unimportant."

"Not to me. I looked like a watermelon."

"Nothing besides? No serious illnesses?"

"None."

"What is your age?"

"Twenty-five."

"Are your parents living?"

"No."

"Were they healthy?"

"Fit as fiddles."

"And your grandparents?"

"Perfect bear-cats. I remember my grandfather at the age of about a hundred or something like that spanking me for breaking his pipe. I thought it was a steam-hammer. He was a wonderfully muscular old gentleman."

"Excellent."

"By the way," said Kirk casually, "my life *is* insured."

"Very sensible. There has been no serious illness in your family at all, then, as far as you know?"

"I could hunt up the records, if you like; but I don't think so."

"Consumption? No? Cancer? No? As far as you are aware, nothing? Very satisfactory."

"I'm glad you're pleased."

"Are you married?"

"Good Lord, no!"

"At your age you should be. With your magnificent physique and remarkable record of health, it is your duty to the future of the race to marry."

"I'm not sure I've been worrying much about the future of the race."

"No man does. It is the crying evil of the day, men's selfish absorption in the present, their utter lack of a sense of duty with regard to the future. Have you read my 'Dawn of Better Things'?"

"I'm afraid I read very few novels."

"It is not a novel. It is a treatise on the need for implanting a sense of personal duty to the future of the race in the modern young man."

"It sounds a crackerjack. I must get it."

"I will send you a copy. At the same time I will send you my 'Principles of Selection' and 'What of To-morrow?' They will make you think."

"I bet they will. Thank you very much."

"And now," said Mrs. Porter, switching the conversation to the gaping George, "you had better put this man to bed."

George Pennicut's opinion of Mrs. Porter, to which he was destined to adhere on closer acquaintance, may be recorded.

"A hawful woman, sir," he whispered as Kirk bore him off.

"Nonsense, George," said Kirk. "One of the most entertaining ladies I have ever met. Already I love her like a son. But how she escaped from Bloomingdale beats me. There's been carelessness somewhere."

The bedrooms attached to the studio opened off the gallery that ran the length of the east wall. Looking over the edge of the gallery before coming down-stairs Kirk perceived his visitor engaged in a tour of the studio. At that moment she was examining his masterpiece, "Ariadne in Naxos." He had called it that because that was what it had turned into.

At the beginning he had had no definite

opinion as to its identity. It was rather a habit with his pictures to start out in a vague spirit of adventure and receive their label on completion. He had an airy and a dashing way in his dealings with the goddess Art.

Nevertheless, he had sufficient of the artist soul to resent the fact that Mrs. Porter was standing a great deal too close to the masterpiece to get its full value.

"You want to stand back a little," he suggested over the rail.

Mrs. Porter looked up.

"Oh, there you are!" she said.

"Yes, here I am," agreed Kirk affably.

"Is this yours?"

"It is."

"You painted it?"

"I did."

"It is poor. It shows a certain feeling for color, but the drawing is weak," said Mrs. Porter. For this wonderful woman was as competent at art criticism as at automobile driving and first aid. "Where did you study?"

"In Paris, if you could call it studying. I'm afraid I was not the model pupil."

"Kindly come down. You are giving me a crick in the neck."

Kirk descended. He found Mrs. Porter still regarding the masterpiece with an unfavorable eye.

"Yes," she said, "the drawing is decidedly weak."

"I shouldn't wonder," assented Kirk. "The dealers to whom I've tried to sell it have not said that in so many words, but they've all begged me with tears in their eyes to take the darned thing away, so I guess you're right."

"Do you depend for a living on the sale of your pictures?"

"Thank Heaven, no. I'm the only artist in captivity with a private income."

"A large income?"

"'Tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. All told, about five thousand iron men per annum."

"Iron men?"

"Bones."

"Bones?"

"I should have said dollars."

"You should. I detest slang."

"Sorry," said Kirk.

Mrs. Porter resumed her tour of the studio. She was interrupted by the arrival of the doctor, a cheerful little old man with the bearing of one sure of his welcome. He was an old friend of Kirk's.

"Well, what's the trouble? I couldn't come sooner. I was visiting a case. *I* work."

"There is no trouble," said Mrs. Porter. The doctor spun round, startled. In the dimness of the studio he had not perceived her. "Mr. Winfield's servant has injured his knee very superficially. There is practically nothing wrong with him. I have made a thorough examination."

The doctor looked from one to the other.

"Is the case in other hands?" he asked.

"You bet it isn't," said Kirk. "Mrs. Porter just looked in for a friendly chat and a glimpse of my pictures. You'll find George in bed, first door on the left upstairs, and a very remarkable sight he is. He is wearing red hair with purple pajamas. Why go abroad when you have not yet seen the wonders of your native land?"

That night Lora Delane Porter wrote in the diary which, with that magnificent freedom from human weakness that marked every aspect of her life, she kept all the year round instead of only during the first week in January.

This is what she wrote:

> Worked steadily on my book. It progresses. In the afternoon an annoying occurrence. An imbecile with red hair placed himself in front of my automobile, fortunately without serious injury to the machine—though the sudden application of the brake cannot be good for the tires. Out of evil, however, came good, for I have made the acquaintance of his employer, a Mr. Winfield, an artist. Mr. Winfield is a man of remarkable physique. I questioned him narrowly, and he appears thoroughly sound. As to his mental attainments I cannot speak so highly; but all men are fools, and Mr. Winfield is not more so than most. I have decided that he shall marry my dear Ruth. They will make a magnificent pair.

CHAPTER II

RUTH STATES HER INTENTIONS

At about the time when Lora Delane Porter was cross-examining Kirk Winfield Bailey Bannister left his club hurriedly.

Inside the club a sad, rabbit-faced young gentleman, who had been unburdening his soul to Bailey, was seeking further consolation in an amber drink with a cherry at the bottom of it. For this young man was one of nature's cherry-chasers. It was the only thing he did really well. His name was Grayling, his height five feet three, his socks pink, and his income enormous.

So much for Grayling. He is of absolutely no importance, either to the world or to this narrative, except in so far that the painful story he has been unfolding to Bailey Bannister has so wrought upon that exquisite as to send him galloping up Fifth Avenue at five miles an hour in search of his sister Ruth.

Let us now examine Bailey. He is a faultlessly dressed young man of about twenty-seven, who takes it as a compliment when people think him older. His mouth, at present gaping with agitation and the unwonted exercise, is, as a rule, primly closed. His eyes, peering through gold-rimmed glasses, protrude slightly, giving him something of the dumb pathos of a codfish.

His hair is pale and scanty, his nose sharp and narrow. He is a junior partner in the firm of Bannister & Son, and it is his unalterable conviction that, if his father would only give him a chance, he could show Wall Street some high finance that would astonish it.

The afternoon was warm. The sun beat down on the avenue. Bailey had not gone two blocks before it occurred to him that swifter and more comfortable progress could be made in a taxicab than on his admirably trousered legs. No more significant proof of the magnitude of his agitation could be brought forward than the fact that he had so far forgotten himself as to walk at all. He hailed a cab and gave the address of a house on the upper avenue.

He leaned back against the cushions, trying to achieve a coolness of mind and

MRS. PORTER LOOKED UP. "OH, THERE YOU ARE!" SHE SAID body. But the heat of the day kept him unpleasantly soluble, and dismay, that perspiration of the soul, refused to be absorbed by the pocket-handkerchief of philosophy.

Bailey Bannister was a young man who considered the minding of other people's business a duty not to be shirked. Life is a rocky road for such. His motto was "Let *me* do it!" He fussed about the affairs of Bannister & Son; he fussed about the welfare of his friends at the club; especially, he fussed about his only sister Ruth.

He looked on himself as a sort of guardian to Ruth. Their mother had died when they were children, and old Mr. Bannister was indifferently equipped with the paternal instinct. He was absorbed, body and soul, in the business of the firm. He lived practically a hermit life in the great house on Fifth Avenue; and, if it had not been for Bailey, so Bailey considered, Ruth would have been allowed to do just whatever she pleased. There were those who said that this was precisely what she did, despite Brother Bailey.

It is a hard world for a conscientious young man of twenty-seven.

Bailey paid the cab and went into the house. It was deliciously cool in the hall, and for a moment peace descended on him. But the distant sound of a piano in the upper regions ejected it again by reminding him of his mission. He bounded up the stairs and knocked at the door of his sister's private den.

The piano stopped as he entered, and the girl on the music-stool glanced over her shoulder.

"Well, Bailey," she said, "you look warm."

"I *am* warm," said Bailey in an aggrieved tone. He sat down solemnly.

"I want to speak to you, Ruth."

Ruth shut the piano and caused the music-stool to revolve till she faced him.

"Well?" she said.

Ruth Bannister was an extraordinarily beautiful girl, "a daughter of the gods, divinely tall, and most divinely fair." From her mother she had inherited the dark eyes and ivory complexion which went so well with her mass of dark hair; from her father a chin of peculiar determination and perfect teeth. Her body was strong and supple. She radiated health.

To her friends Ruth was a source of perplexity. It was difficult to understand her. In the set in which she moved girls married young; yet season followed season, and Ruth remained single, and this so obviously of her own free will that the usual explanation of such a state of things broke down as soon as it was tested.

In shoals during her first two seasons, and lately with less unanimity, men of every condition, from a prince—somewhat battered, but still a prince—to the Bannisters' English butler—a good man, but at the moment under the influence of tawny port, had laid their hearts at her feet. One and all, they had been compelled to pick them up and take them elsewhere. She was generally kind on these occasions, but always very firm. The determined chin gave no hope that she might yield to importunity. The eyes that backed up the message of the chin were pleasant, but inflexible.

Generally it was with a feeling akin to relief that the rejected, when time had begun to heal the wound, contemplated their position. There was something about this girl, they decided, which no fellow could understand: she frightened them; she made them feel that their hands were large and red and their minds weak and empty. She was waiting for something. What it was they did not know, but it was plain that they were not it, and off they went to live happily ever after with girls who ate candy and read best-sellers. And Ruth went on her way, cool and watchful and mysterious, waiting.

The room which Ruth had taken for her own gave, like all rooms when intelligently considered, a clue to the character of its owner. It was the only room in the house furnished with any taste or simplicity. The furniture was exceedingly expensive, but did not look so. The key-note of the color-scheme was green and white. All round the walls were books. Except for a few prints, there were no pictures; and the only photograph visible stood in a silver frame on a little table.

It was the portrait of a woman of about fifty, square-jawed, tight-lipped, who stared almost threateningly out of the frame; exceedingly handsome, but, to the ordinary male, too formidable to be attractive. On this was written in a bold hand, bristling with emphatic down-strokes and wholly free from feminine flourish: "To my dear

Ruth from her Aunt Lora." And below the signature, in what printers call "quotes," a line that was evidently an extract from somebody's published works: "Bear the torch and do not falter."

Bailey inspected this photograph with disfavor. It always irritated him. The information, conveyed to him by amused friends, that his Aunt Lora had once described Ruth as a jewel in a dust-bin, seemed to him to carry an offensive innuendo directed at himself and the rest of the dwellers in the Bannister home. Also, she had called him a worm. Also, again, his actual encounters with the lady, though few, had been memorably unpleasant. Furthermore, he considered that she had far too great an influence on Ruth. And, lastly, that infernal sentence about the torch, which he found perfectly meaningless, had a habit of running in his head like a catch-phrase, causing him the keenest annoyance.

He pursed his lips disapprovingly and averted his eyes.

"Don't sniff at Aunt Lora, Bailey," said Ruth. "I've had to speak to you about that before. What's the matter? What has sent you flying up here?"

"I have had a shock," said Bailey. "I have been very greatly disturbed. I have just been speaking to Clarence Grayling."

He eyed her accusingly through his gold-rimmed glasses. She remained tranquil.

"And what had Clarence to say?"

"A great many things."

"I gather he told you I had refused him."

"If it were only that!"

Ruth rapped the piano sharply.

"Bailey," she said, "wake up. Either get to the point or go or read a book or do some tatting or talk about something else. You know perfectly well that I absolutely refuse to endure your impressive manner. I believe when people ask you the time you look pained and important and make a mystery of it. What's troubling you? I should have thought Clarence would have kept quiet about insulting me. But apparently he has no sense of shame."

Bailey gaped. Bailey was shocked and alarmed.

"Insulting you! What do you mean? Clarence is a gentleman. He is incapable of insulting a woman."

"Is he? He told me I was a suitable wife for a wretched dwarf with the miserably inadequate intelligence which nature gave him reduced to practically a minus quantity by alcohol! At least, he implied it. He asked me to marry him."

"I have just left him at the club. He is very upset."

"I should imagine so." A soft smile played over Ruth's face. "I spoke to Clarence. I explained things to him. I lit up Clarence's little mind like a search-light."

Bailey rose, tremulous with just wrath.

"You spoke to him in a way that I can only call outrageous and improper, and—er—outrageous."

He paced the room with agitated strides. Ruth watched him calmly.

"If the overflowing emotion of a giant soul in torment makes you knock over a table or smash a chair," she said, "I shall send the bill for repairs to you. You had far better sit down and talk quietly. What *is* worrying you, Bailey?"

"Is it nothing," demanded her brother, "that my sister should have spoken to a man as you spoke to Clarence Grayling?"

With an impassioned gesture he sent a flower-vase crashing to the floor.

"I told you so," said Ruth. "Pick up the bits, and don't let the water spoil the carpet. Use your handkerchief. I should say that that would cost you about six dollars, dear. Why will you let yourself be so temperamental? Now let me try and think what it was I said to Clarence. As far as I can remember it was the mere A B C of eugenics."

Bailey, on his knees, picking up broken glass, raised a flushed and accusing face.

"Ah! Eugenics! You admit it!"

"I think," went on Ruth placidly, "I asked him what sort of children he thought we were likely to have if we married."

"A nice girl ought not to think about such things."

"I don't think about anything else much. A woman can't do a great deal, even nowadays, but she can have a conscience and feel that she owes something to the future of the race. She can feel that it is her duty to bring fine children into the world. As Aunt Lora says, she can carry the torch and not falter."

Bailey shied like a startled horse at the hated phrase. He pointed furiously at the photograph of the great thinker.

"You're talking like that—that damned woman!"

"Bailey *precious!* You mustn't use such wicked, wicked words."

Bailey rose, pink and wrathful.

"If you're going to break another vase," said Ruth, "you will really have to go."

"Ever since that—that—" cried Bailey. "Ever since Aunt Lora—"

Ruth smiled indulgently.

"That's more like my little man," she said. "He knows as well as I do how wrong it is to swear."

"Be quiet! Ever since Aunt Lora got hold of you, I say, you have become a sort of gramophone, spouting her opinions."

"But what sensible opinions!"

"It's got to stop. Aunt Lora! My God! Who is she? Just look at her record. She disgraces the family by marrying a grubby newspaper fellow called Porter. He has the sense to die. I will say that for him. She thrusts herself into public notice by a series of books and speeches on subjects of which a decent woman ought to know nothing. And now she gets hold of you, fills you up with her disgusting nonsense, makes a sort of disciple of you, gives you absurd ideas, poisons your mind, and—er—er—"

"Bailey! This is positive eloquence!"

"It's got to stop. It's bad enough in her; but every one knows she is crazy, and makes allowances. But in a young girl like you."

He choked.

"In a young girl like me," prompted Ruth in a low, tragic voice.

"It—it's not right. It—it's not proper." He drew a long breath. "It's all wrong. It's got to stop."

"He's perfectly wonderful!" murmured Ruth. "He just opens his mouth and the words come out. But I knew he was somebody, directly I saw him, by his forehead. Like a dome!"

Bailey mopped the dome.

"Perhaps you don't know it," he said, "but you're getting yourself talked about. You go about saying perfectly impossible things to people. You won't marry. You have refused nearly every friend I have."

Ruth shuddered.

"Your friends are awful, Bailey. They are all turned out on a pattern, like a flock of sheep. They bleat. They have all got little, narrow faces without chins or big, fat faces without foreheads. Ugh!"

"None of them good enough for you, is that it?"

"Not nearly."

Emotion rendered Bailey—for him—almost vulgar.

"I guess you hate yourself!" he snapped.

"No, *sir,*" beamed Ruth. "I think I'm perfectly beautiful."

Bailey grunted. Ruth came to him and gave him a sisterly kiss. She was very fond of Bailey, though she declined to reverence him.

"Cheer up, Bailey boy," she said. "Don't you worry yourself. There's a method in my madness. I'll find him sooner or later, and then you'll be glad I waited."

"Him? What do you mean?"

"Why, *him,* of course. The ideal young man. That's who—or is it whom?—I'm waiting for. Bailey, shall I tell you something? You're so scarlet already — poor boy, you ought not to rush around in this hot weather — that it won't make you blush. It's this. I'm ambitious. I mean to marry the finest man in the world and have the greatest little old baby you ever dreamed of. By the way, now I remember, I told Clarence that."

Bailey uttered a strangled exclamation.

"It *has* made you blush! You turned purple. Well, now you know. I mean my baby to be the most splendid baby that was ever born. He's going to be strong and straight and clever and handsome, and —oh, everything else you can think of. That's why I'm waiting for the ideal young man. If I don't find him I shall die an old maid. But I shall find him. We may pass each other on Fifth Avenue. We may sit next each other at a theater. Wherever it is, I shall just reach right out and grab him and whisk him away. And if he's married already, he'll have to get a divorce. And I sha'n't care who he is. He may be any one. I don't mind if he's a ribbon clerk or a prize-fighter or a policeman or a cab-driver, so long as he's the right man."

Bailey plied the handkerchief on his streaming forehead. The heat of the day and the horror of this conversation were reducing his weight at the rate of ounces a minute. In his most jaundiced mood he had never imagined these frightful sentiments to be lurking in Ruth's mind.

"You can't mean that!" he cried.

"I mean every word of it," said Ruth. "I hope, for your sake, he won't turn out to be a waiter or a prize-fighter, but it won't make any difference to me."

"You're crazy!"

"Well, just now you said Aunt Lora was. If she is, I am."

"I knew it! I said she had been putting these ghastly ideas into your head. I'd like to strangle that woman."

"Don't you try! Have you ever felt Aunt Lora's biceps? It's like a man's. She does dumb-bells every morning."

"I've a good mind to speak to father. Somebody's got to make you stop this insanity."

"Just as you please. But you know how father hates to be worried about things that don't concern business."

Bailey did. His father, of whom he stood in the greatest awe, was very little interested in any subject except the financial affairs of the firm of Bannister & Son. It required greater courage than Bailey possessed to place this matter before him. He had an uneasy feeling that Ruth knew it.

"I would, if it were necessary," he said. "But I don't believe you're serious."

"Stick to that idea as long as ever you can, Bailey dear," said Ruth. "It will comfort you."

CHAPTER III

THE MATES MEET

KIRK WINFIELD was an amiable, if rather weak, young man with whom life, for twenty-five years, had dealt kindly. He had perfect health, an income more than sufficient for his needs, a profession which interested without monopolizing him, a thoroughly contented disposition, and the happy knack of surrounding himself with friends.

That he had to contribute to the support of the majority of these friends might have seemed a drawback to some men. Kirk did not object to it in the least. He had enough money to meet their needs, and, being a sociable person who enjoyed mixing with all sorts and conditions of men, he found the Liberty Hall régime pleasant.

He liked to be a magnet, attracting New York's Bohemian population. If he had his preferences among the impecunious crowd who used the studio as a chapel of ease, strolling in when it pleased them, drinking his whisky, smoking his cigarettes, borrowing his money, and, on occasion, his spare bedrooms and his pajamas, he never showed it. He was fully as pleasant to Percy Shanklyn, the elegant, perpetually resting English actor, whom he disliked as far as he was capable of disliking any one, as he was to Hank Jardine, the prospector, and Hank's prize-fighter friend, Steve Dingle, both of whom he liked enormously.

It seemed to him sometimes that he had drifted into the absolutely ideal life. He lived entirely in the present. The passage of time left him untouched. Day followed day, week followed week, and nothing seemed to change. He was never unhappy, never ill, never bored.

He would get up in the morning with the comfortable knowledge that the day held no definite duties. George Pennicut would produce one of his excellent breakfasts. The next mile-stone would be the arrival of Steve Dingle. Five brisk rounds with Steve, a cold bath, and a rub-down took him pleasantly on to lunch, after which it amused him to play at painting.

There was always something to do when he wearied of that until, almost before the day had properly begun, up came George with one of his celebrated dinners. And then began the incursion of his friends. One by one they would drop in, making themselves very much at home, to help their host through till bedtime. And another day would slip into the past.

It never occurred to Kirk that he was wasting his life. He had no ambitions. Ambition is born of woman, and no woman that he had met had ever stirred him deeply. He had never been in love, and he had come to imagine that he was incapable of anything except a mild liking for women. He considered himself immune, and was secretly glad of it. He enjoyed his go-as-you-please existence too much to want to have it upset. He belonged, in fact, to the type which, when the moment arrives, falls in love very suddenly, very violently, and for all time.

Nothing could have convinced him of this. He was like a child lighting matches in a powder-magazine. When the idea of marriage crossed his mind he thrust it from him with a kind of shuddering horror. He could not picture to himself a woman who could compensate him for the loss of his freedom and, still less, of his friends.

His friends were men's men; he could not see them fitting into a scheme of life that involved the perpetual presence of a hostess. Hank Jardine, for instance. To Kirk, the great point about Hank was that he had been everywhere, seen everything, and was, when properly stimulated with tobacco and drink, a fountain of reminiscence. But he could not talk unless he had his coat off and his feet up on the back of a chair. No hostess could be expected to relish that.

Hank was a bachelor's friend; he did not belong in a married household. The abstract wife could not be reconciled to him, and Kirk, loving Hank like a brother, firmly dismissed the abstract wife.

He came to look upon himself as a confirmed bachelor. He had thought out the question of marriage in all its aspects, and decided against it. He was the strong man who knew his own mind and could not be shaken.

Yet, on the afternoon of the day following Mrs. Lora Delane Porter's entry into his life, Kirk sat in the studio, feeling, for the first time in recent years, a vague discontent. He was uneasy, almost afraid. The slight dislocation in the smooth-working machinery of his existence, caused by the compulsory retirement of George Pennicut, had made him thoroughly uncomfortable. With discomfort had come introspection, and with introspection this uneasiness that was almost fear.

A man, living alone, without money troubles to worry him, sinks inevitably into a routine. Fatted ease is good for no one. It sucks the soul out of a man. Kirk, as he sat smoking in the cool dusk of the studio, was wondering, almost in a panic, whether all was well with himself.

This mild domestic calamity had upset him so infernally. It could not be right that so slight a change in his habits should have such an effect upon him. George had been so little hurt—the doctor gave him a couple of days before complete recovery — that it had not seemed worth while to Kirk to engage a substitute. It was simpler to go out for his meals and make his own bed. And it was the realization that this alteration in his habits had horribly disturbed and unsettled him that was making Kirk subject himself now to an examination of quite unusual severity.

He hated softness. Physically, he kept himself always in perfect condition. Had he become spiritually flabby? Certainly this unexpected call on his energies would appear to have found him unprepared. It spoiled his whole day, knowing, when he got out of bed in the morning, that he must hunt about and find his food instead of sitting still and having it brought to him. It frightened him to think how set he had become.

Forty-eight hours ago he would have scorned the suggestion that he coddled himself. He would have produced as evidence to the contrary his cold baths, his exercises, his bouts with Steve Dingle. To-day he felt less confidence. For all his baths and boxing, the fact remained that he had become, at the age of twenty-six, such a slave to habit that a very trifling deviation from settled routine had been enough to poison life for him.

Bachelors have these black moments, and it is then that the abstract wife comes into her own. To Kirk, brooding in the dusk, the figure of the abstract wife seemed to grow less formidable, the fact that she might not get on with Hank Jardine of less importance.

The revolutionary thought that life was rather a bore, and would become more and more of a bore as the years went on, unless he had some one to share it with, crept into his mind and stayed there.

He shivered. These were unpleasant thoughts, and in his hour of clear vision he knew whence they came. They were entirely due to the knowledge that, instead of sitting comfortably at home, he would be compelled in a few short hours to go out and get dinner at some restaurant. To such a pass had he come in the twenty-sixth year of his life.

Once the gods have marked a bachelor down, they give him few chances of escape. It was when Kirk's mood was at its blackest, and the figure of the abstract wife had ceased to be a menace and become a shining angel of salvation, that Lora Delane Porter, with Ruth Bannister at her side, rang the studio bell.

Kirk went to the door. He hoped it was a tradesman; he feared it was a friend. In his present state of mind he had no use for friends. When he found himself confronting Mrs. Porter he became momentarily incapable of speech. It had not entered his mind that she would pay him a second visit. Possibly it was joy that rendered him dumb.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Winfield," said Mrs. Porter. "I have come to inquire after the man Pennicut. Ruth, this is Mr. Winfield. Mr. Winfield, my niece, Miss Bannister."

And Kirk perceived for the first time that his visitor was not alone. In the shadow behind her a girl was standing. He stood aside to let Mrs. Porter pass, and Ruth came into the light.

If there are degrees in speechlessness, Kirk's aphasia became doubled and trebled at the sight of her. It seemed to him that he went all to pieces, as if he had received a violent blow. Curious physical changes were taking place in him. His legs, which only that morning he had looked upon as eminently muscular, he now discovered to be composed of some curiously unstable jelly.

He also perceived—a fact which he had never before suspected—that he had heart-disease. His lungs, too, were in poor condition; he found it practically impossible to breathe. The violent trembling fit which assailed him he attributed to general organic weakness.

He gaped at Ruth.

Ruth, outwardly, remained unaffected by the meeting, but inwardly she was feeling precisely the same sensation of smallness which had come to Mrs. Porter on her first meeting with Kirk. If this sensation had been novel to Mrs. Porter, it was even stranger to Ruth.

To think humbly of herself was an experience that seldom happened to her. She was perfectly aware that her beauty was remarkable even in a city of beautiful women, and it was rarely that she permitted her knowledge of that fact to escape her. Her beauty, to her, was a natural phenomenon, impossible to overlook. The realization of it did not obtrude itself into her mind, it simply existed subconsciously.

Yet for an instant it ceased to exist. She was staggered by a sense of inferiority.

It lasted but a pin-point of time, this riotous upheaval of her nature. She recovered herself so swiftly that Kirk, busy with his own emotions, had no suspicion of it.

A moment later he, too, was himself again. He was conscious of feeling curiously uplifted and thrilled, as if the world had suddenly become charged with ozone and electricity, and for some reason he felt capable of great feats of muscle and energy; but the aphasia had left him, and he addressed himself with a clear brain to the task of entertaining his visitors.

"George is better to-day," he reported.

"He never was bad," said Mrs. Porter succinctly.

"He doesn't think so."

"Possibly not. He is hopelessly weak-minded."

Ruth laughed. Kirk thrilled at the sound.

"Poor George!" she observed.

"Don't waste your sympathy, my dear," said Mrs. Porter. "That he is injured at all is his own fault. For years he has allowed himself to become gross and flabby, with the result that the collision did damage which it would not have done to a man in hard condition. You, Mr. Winfield," she added, turning abruptly to Kirk, "would scarcely have felt it. But then you," went on Mrs. Porter, "are in good condition. Cold baths?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Do you take cold baths?"

"I do."

"Do you do Swedish exercises?"

"I go through a series of evolutions every morning, with the utmost loathing. I started them as a boy, and they have become a habit like dram-drinking. I would leave them off if I could, but I can't."

"Do nothing of the kind. They are invaluable."

"But undignified."

"Let me feel your biceps, Mr. Winfield," said Mrs. Porter. She nodded approvingly. "Like iron." She poised a finger and ran a meditative glance over his form. Kirk eyed her apprehensively. The finger darted forward and struck home in the region of the third waistcoat button. "Wonderful!" she exclaimed. "Ruth!"

"Yes, aunt."

"Prod Mr. Winfield where my finger is pointing. He is extraordinarily muscular."

"I say, really!" protested Kirk. He was a modest young man, and this exploration of his more intimate anatomy by the finger-tips of the girl he loved was not to be contemplated.

"Just as you please," said Mrs. Porter. "If I were a man of your physique, I should be proud of it."

"Wouldn't you like to go up and see George?" asked Kirk. It was hard on George, but it was imperative that this woman be removed somehow.

" Very well. I have brought him a little book to read, which will do him good. It is called ' Elementary Rules for the Preservation of the Body.' "

" He has learned one of them, all right, since yesterday," said Kirk. " Not to walk about in front of automobiles."

" The rules I refer to are mainly concerned with diet and wholesome exercise," explained Mrs. Porter. " Careful attention to them may yet save him. His case is not hopeless. Ruth, let Mr. Winfield show you his pictures. They are poor in many respects, but not entirely without merit."

Ruth, meanwhile, had been sitting on the couch, listening to the conversation without really hearing it. She was in a dreamy, contented mood. She found herself curiously soothed by the atmosphere of the studio, with its shaded lights and its atmosphere of peace. That was the keynote of the place, peace.

From outside came the rumble of an Elevated train, subdued and softened, like faintly heard thunder. Somebody passed the window, whistling. A barrier seemed to separate her from these noises of the city. New York was very far away.

" I believe I could be wonderfully happy in a place like this," she thought.

She became suddenly aware, in the midst of her meditations, of eyes watching her intently. She looked up and met Kirk's.

She could read the message in them as clearly as if he had spoken it, and she was conscious of a little thrill of annoyance at the thought of all the tiresome formalities which must be gone through before he could speak it. They seemed absurd.

It was all so simple. He wanted her; she wanted him. She had known it from the moment of their meeting. The man had found his woman, the woman her man. Nature had settled the whole affair in an instant. And now civilization, propriety, etiquette, whatever one cared to call it, must needs step in with rules and regulations and precedents.

The goal was there, clear in sight, but it must be reached by the winding road appointed. She, being a woman and, by virtue of her sex, primeval, scorned the road, and would have ignored it. But she knew men, and especially, at that moment as their eyes met, she knew Kirk; and she understood that to him the road was a thing that could not be ignored. The mere idea of doing so would seem grotesque and impossible, probably even shocking, to him. Men were odd, formal creatures, slaves to precedent.

He must have time, it was the prerogative of the male; time to reveal himself to her, to strut before her, to go through the solemn comedy of proving to her, by the exhibition of his virtues and the careful suppression of his defects, what had been clear to her from the first instant, that here was her mate, the man nature had set apart for her.

He would begin by putting on a new suit of clothes and having his hair cut.

She smiled. It was silly and tiresome, but it was funny.

" Will you show me your pictures, Mr. Winfield?" she asked.

" If you'd really care to see them. I'm afraid they're pretty bad."

" Exhibit A. Modesty," thought Ruth. The journey had begun.

CHAPTER IV

TROUBLED WATERS

It is not easy in this world to take any definite step without annoying somebody, and Kirk, in embarking on his wooing of Ruth Bannister, failed signally to do so. Lora Delane Porter beamed graciously upon him, like a pleased Providence, but the rest of his circle of acquaintance were ill at ease.

The statement does not include Hank Jardine, for Hank was out of New York; but the others — Shanklyn, the actor; Wren, the newspaperman; Bryce, Johnson, Willis, Appleton, and the rest—sensed impending change in the air, and were uneasy, like cattle before a thunder-storm. The fact that the visits of Mrs. Porter and Ruth to inquire after George, now of daily occurrence, took place in the afternoon, while they, Kirk's dependents, seldom or never appeared in the studio till drawn there by the scent of the evening meal, it being understood that during the daytime Kirk liked to work undisturbed, kept them ignorant of the new development.

All they knew was that during the last two weeks a subtle change had taken place in Kirk. He was less genial, more prone to irritability than of old. He had developed fits of absent-mindedness, and was frequently to be found staring pensively at nothing. To slap him on the back at such moments, as Wren ventured to do on one occasion, Wren belonging to the jovial school of thought which holds that nature gave us hands in order to slap backs, was to bring forth a new and unexpected Kirk, a Kirk who scowled and snarled and was hardly to be appeased with apology. Stranger still, this new Kirk could be summoned into existence by precisely the type of story at which, but a few weeks back, he would have been the first to laugh.

Percy Shanklyn, whose conversation consisted of equal parts of autobiography and of stories of the type alluded to, was the one to discover this. His latest, which he had counted on to set the table in a roar, produced from Kirk criticism so adverse and so crisply delivered that he refrained from telling his latest but one and spent the rest of the evening wondering, like his fellow visitors, what had happened to Kirk and whether he was sickening for something.

Not one of them had the faintest suspicion that these symptoms indicated that Kirk, for the first time in his easy-going life, was in love. They had never contemplated such a prospect. It was not till his conscientious and laborious courtship had been in progress for over two weeks and was nearing the stage when he felt that the possibility of revealing his state of mind to Ruth was not so remote as it had been, that a chance visit of Percy Shanklyn to the studio during the afternoon solved the mystery.

One calls it a chance visit because Percy had not been meaning to borrow twenty dollars from Kirk that day at all. The man slated for the loan was one Burrows, a kindly member of the Lambs Club. But fate and a telegram from a manager removed Burrows to Chicago, while Percy was actually circling preparatory to the swoop, and the only other man in New York who seemed to Percy good for the necessary sum at that precise moment was Kirk.

He flew to Kirk and found him with Ruth. Kirk's utter absence of any enthusiasm at the sight of him, the reluctance with which he made the introduction, the glumness with which he bore his share of the three-cornered conversation—all these things convinced Percy that this was no ordinary visitor.

Many years of living by his wits had developed in Percy highly sensitive powers of observation. Brief as his visit was, he came away as certain that Kirk was in love with this girl, and that the girl was in love with Kirk, as he had ever been of anything in his life.

As he walked slowly down-town he was thinking hard. The subject occupying his mind was the problem of how this thing was to be stopped.

Percy Shanklyn was a sleek, suave, unpleasant youth who had been imported by a theatrical manager two years before to play the part of an English dude in a new comedy. The comedy had been what its enthusiastic backer had described in the newspaper advertisements as a "rousing live-wire success." That is to say, it had staggered along for six weeks on Broadway to extremely poor houses, and after three weeks on the road, had perished for all time, leaving Percy out of work.

Since then, no other English dude part having happened along, he had rested, living in the mysterious way in which out-of-work actors do live. He had a number of acquaintances, such as the amiable Burrows, who were good for occasional loans, but Kirk Winfield was the king of them all. There was something princely about the careless open-handedness of Kirk's methods, and Percy's whole soul rose in revolt against the prospect of being deprived of this source of revenue, as something, possibly Ruth's determined chin, told him that he would be, should Kirk marry this girl.

He had placed Ruth at once, directly he had heard her name. He remembered having seen her photograph in the society section of the Sunday paper which he borrowed each week. This was the daughter of old John Bannister. There was no doubt about that. How she had found her way to Kirk's studio he could not understand; but there she certainly was, and Percy was willing to bet the twenty dollars which, despite the excitement of the moment, he had not forgotten to extract from Kirk in a hurried conversation at the door, that her presence there was not known and approved by her father.

The only reasonable explanation that Kirk was painting her portrait he dismissed. There had been no signs of any portrait, and Kirk's embarrassment had been so obvious that, if there had been any such explanation, he would certainly have given it. No, Ruth had been there for other reasons than those of art.

"Unchaperoned, too, by Jove!" thought Percy virtuously, ignorant of Mrs. Lora Delane Porter, who, at the time of his call, had been busily occupied in a back room instilling into George Pennicut the gospel of the fit body. For George, now restored to health, had ceased to be a mere student of "Elementary Rules for the Preservation of the Body" and had become an active, though unwilling practiser of its precepts.

Every afternoon Mrs. Porter called and, having shepherded him into the back room, put him relentlessly through his exercises. George's groans, as he moved his stout limbs along the dotted lines indicated in the book's illustrated plates, might have stirred a faint heart to pity. But Lora Delane Porter was made of sterner stuff. If George so much as bent his knees while touching his toes he heard of it instantly, in no uncertain voice.

Thus, in her decisive way, did Mrs. Porter spread light and sweetness with both hands, achieving the bodily salvation of George while, at the same time, furthering the loves of Ruth and Kirk by leaving them alone together to make each other's better acquaintance in the romantic dimness of the studio.

Percy proceeded down-town, pondering. His first impulse, I regret to say, was to send Ruth's father an anonymous letter. This plan he abandoned from motives of fear rather than of self-respect. Anonymous letters are too frequently traced to their writers, and the prospect of facing Kirk in such an event did not appeal to him.

As he could think of no other way of effecting his object, he had begun to taste the bitterness of futile effort, when fortune, always his friend, put him in a position to do what he wanted in the easiest possible way with the minimum of unpleasantness.

Bailey Bannister, that strong, keen Napoleon of finance, was not above a little relaxation of an evening when his father happened to be out of town. That giant mind, weary with the strain of business, needed refreshment.

And so, at eleven thirty that night, his father being in Albany, and not expected home till next day, Bailey might have been observed, beautifully arrayed and discreetly jovial, partaking of lobster at one of those Broadway palaces where this fish is in brisk demand. He was in company with his rabbit-faced friend, Clarence Grayling, and two members of the chorus of a neighboring musical comedy.

One of the two, with whom Clarence was conversing in a lively manner that showed his heart had not been irreparably broken as the result of his recent interview with Ruth, we may dismiss. Like Clarence, she is of no importance to the story. The other, who, not finding Bailey's measured remarks very gripping, was allowing her gaze to wander idly around the room, has this claim to a place in the scheme of things, that she had played a wordless part in the comedy in which Percy Shanklyn had appeared as the English dude and was on terms of friendship with him.

Consequently, seeing him enter the room, as he did at that moment, she signaled him to approach.

"It's a little feller who was with me in 'The Man from Out West,'" she explained to Bailey as Percy made his way toward them. At which Bailey's prim mouth closed with an air of disapproval.

The feminine element of the stage he found congenial to his business-harassed brain, but with the "little fellers" who helped them to keep the national drama sizzling he felt less in sympathy; and he resented extremely his companion's tactlessness in inciting this infernal mummer to intrude upon his privacy.

He prepared to be cold and distant with Percy. And when Bailey, never a ray of sunshine, deliberately tried to be chilly, those with him at the time generally had the sensation that winter was once more in their midst.

Percy, meanwhile, threaded his way among the tables, little knowing that fate had already solved the problem which had worried him the greater part of the day.

He had come to the restaurant as a relief from his thoughts. If he could find some kind friend who would invite him to supper, well and good. If not, he was feeling so tired and depressed that he was ready to take the bull by the horns and pay for his meal himself. He had obeyed Miss Freda Reece's signal because it was impossible to avoid doing so; but one glance at Bailey's face had convinced him that not there was his kind host.

"Why, Perce," said Miss Reece, "I ain't saw you in years. Where you been hiding yourself?"

Percy gave a languid gesture indicative of the man of affairs whose time is not his own.

"Percy," continued Miss Reece, "shake hands with my friend Mr. Bannister. I been telling him about how you made such a hit as the pin in 'Pinafore'!"

The name galvanized Percy like a bugle-blast.

"Mr. Bannister!" he exclaimed. "Any relation to Mr. John Bannister, the millionaire?"

Bailey favored him with a scrutiny through the gold-rimmed glasses which would have frozen his very spine.

"My father's name is—ah—John, and he is a millionaire."

Percy met the scrutiny with a suave smile.

"By Jove!" he said. "I know your sister quite well, Mr. Bannister. I meet her frequently at the studio of my friend Kirk Winfield. Very frequently. She is there nearly every day. Well, I must be moving on. Got a date with a man. Good-by, Freda. Glad you're going strong. Good night, Mr. Bannister. Delighted to have made your acquaintance. You must come round to the studio one of these days. Good night."

He moved softly away. Miss Reece watched him go with regret.

"He's a good little feller, Percy," she said. "And so he knows your sister. Well, ain't that nice!"

Bailey did not reply. And to the feast of reason and flow of soul that went on at the table during the rest of the meal he contributed so little that Miss Reece, in conversation that night with her friend, alluded to him, not without justice, first as "that stiff," and, later, as "a dead one."

If Percy Shanklyn could have seen Bailey in the small hours of that night he would have been satisfied that his words had borne fruit. Like a modern Prometheus, Bailey writhed, sleepless, on his bed till daylight appeared. The discovery that Ruth was in the habit of paying clandestine visits to artists' studios, where she met men like the little bounder who had been thrust upon him at supper, rent his haughty soul like a bomb.

He knew no artists, but he had read novels of Bohemian life in Paris, and he had gathered a general impression that they were, as a class, shock-headed, unwashed persons of no social standing whatever, extremely short of money and much addicted to orgies. And his sister had lowered herself by association with one of these.

He rose early. His appearance in the mirror shocked him. He looked positively haggard.

Dressing with unwonted haste, he inquired for Ruth, and was told that a telephone message had come from her late the previous evening to say that she was spending the night at the apartment of Mrs. Lora Delane Porter. The hated name increased Bailey's indignation. He held Mrs. Porter responsible for the whole trouble. But for her pernicious influence, Ruth would have been an ordinary sweet American girl, running as, Bailey held, a girl should, in a decent groove.

It increased his troubles that his father was away from New York. Bailey, who enjoyed the dignity of being temporary head of the firm of Bannister & Son, had approved of his departure. But now he would have given much to have him on the spot. He did not doubt his own ability to handle this matter, but he felt that his father ought to know what was going on.

His wrath against this upstart artist who secretly entertained his sister in his studio grew with the minutes. It would be his privilege very shortly to read that scrubby dauber a lesson in deportment which he would remember.

In the interests of the family welfare he decided to stay away from the office that day. The affairs of Bannister & Son would be safe for the time being in the hands of the head clerk. Having telephoned to Wall Street to announce this decision, he made a moody breakfast and then proceeded, as was his custom of a morning, to the gymnasium for his daily exercise.

The gymnasium was a recent addition to the Bannister home. It had been established as the result of a heart-to-heart talk between old John Bannister and his doctor. The doctor spoke earnestly of nervous prostration, and stated without preamble the exact number of months which would elapse before Mr. Bannister, living his present life, would make first-hand acquaintance with it. He insisted on a regular routine of exercise. The gymnasium came into being, and Mr. Steve Dingle, physical instructor at the New York Athletic Club, took up a position in the Bannister household which he was wont to describe to his numerous friends as a soft snap.

Certainly his hours were not long. Thirty minutes with old Mr. Bannister and thirty minutes with Mr. Bailey between eight and nine in the morning and his duties were over for the day. But Steve was conscientious and checked any disposition on the part of his two clients to shirk work with a firmness which Lora Delane Porter might have envied.

There were moments when he positively bullied old Mr. Bannister. It would have amazed the clerks in his Wall Street office to see the meekness with which the old man obeyed orders. But John Bannister was a man who liked to get his money's worth, and he knew that Steve was giving it to the last cent.

Steve at that time was twenty-eight years old. He had abandoned an active connection with the ring, which had begun just after his seventeenth birthday, twelve months before his entry into the Bannister home, leaving behind him a record of which any boxer might have been proud. He personally was exceedingly proud of it, and made no secret of the fact.

He was a man in private life of astonishingly even temper. The only thing that appeared to have the power to ruffle him to the slightest extent was the contemplation of what he described as the bunch of cheeses who pretended to fight nowadays. He would have considered it a privilege, it seemed, to be allowed to encounter all the middleweights in the country in one ring in a single night without training. But it appeared that he had promised his mother to quit, and he had quit.

Steve's mother was an old lady who in her day had been the best washerwoman on Cherry Hill. She was, moreover, completely lacking in all the qualities which go to make up the patroness of sport. Steve had been injudicious enough to pay her a visit the day after his celebrated unpleasantness with that rugged warrior, Pat O'Flaherty (*né* Smith), and, though he had knocked Pat out midway through the second round, he bore away from the arena a black eye of such a startling richness that old Mrs. Dingle had refused to be comforted until he had promised never to enter the ring again. Which, as Steve said, had come pretty hard, he being a man who would rather be a water-bucket in a ring than a president outside it.

But he had given the promise, and kept it, leaving the field to the above-mentioned bunch of cheeses. There were times when the temptation to knock the head off Battling Dick this and Fighting Jack that became almost agony, but he never yielded to it. All of which suggests that Steve was a man of character, as indeed he was.

Bailey, entering the gymnasium, found Steve already there, punching the bag with a force and precision which showed that the bunch of cheeses ought to have been highly grateful to Mrs. Dingle for her anti-pugilistic prejudices.

" Good morning, Dingle," said Bailey precisely.

Steve nodded. Bailey began to don his gymnasium costume. Steve gave the ball a final punch and turned to him. He was a young man who gave the impression of being, in a literal sense, perfectly square. This was due to the breadth of his shoulders, which was quite out of proportion to his height. His chest was extraordinarily deep, and his stomach and waist small, so that to the observer seeing him for the first time in boxing trunks, he seemed to begin as a big man and, half-way down, change his mind and become a small one.

His arms, which were unusually long and thick, hung down nearly to his knees and were decorated throughout with knobs and ridges of muscle that popped up and down and in and out as he moved in a manner both fascinating and frightening. His face increased the illusion of squareness, for he had thick, straight eyebrows, a straight mouth, and a chin of almost the minimum degree of roundness. He inspected Bailey with a pair of brilliant brown eyes which no detail of his appearance could escape. And Bailey, that morning, as has been said, was not looking his best.

" You're lookin' kind o' sick, bo," was Steve's comment. " I guess you was hittin' it up with the gang last night in one of them lobster parlors."

Bailey objected to being addressed as " bo," and he was annoyed that Steve should have guessed the truth respecting his overnight movements. Still more was he annoyed that Steve's material mind should attribute to a surfeit of lobster a pallor that was superinduced by a tortured soul.

"I did—ah—take supper last night, it is true," he said. "But if I am a little pale to-day, that is not the cause. Things have occurred to annoy me intensely."

"You should worry!" advised Steve. "Catch!"

The heavy medicine-ball struck Bailey in the chest before he could bring up his hands and sent him staggering back.

"Damn it, Dingle," he gasped. "Kindly give me warning before you do that sort of thing."

Steve was delighted. It amused his simple, honest soul to catch Bailey napping, and the incident gave him a text on which to hang a lecture. And, next to fighting, he loved best the sound of his own voice.

"Warning? Nix!" he said. "Ain't it just what I been telling you every day for weeks? You gotta be ready *always.* You seen me holding the pellet. You should oughter have been saying to yourself: 'I gotta keep an eye on that gink, so's he don't soak me one with that thing when I ain't looking.' Then you would have caught it and whizzed it back at me, and maybe, if I hadn't been ready for it, you might have knocked the breeze clean out of me."

"I should have derived no pleasure—"

"Why, say, suppose a plug-ugly sasshays up to you on the street to take a crack at your pearl stick-pin, do you reckon he's going to drop you a postal card first? You gotta be *ready* for him. See what I mean?"

"Let us spar," said Bailey austerely. He had begun to despair of ever making Steve show him that deference and respect which he considered due to the son of the house. The more frigid he was, the more genial and friendly did Steve become. The thing seemed hopeless.

It was a pleasing sight to see Bailey spar. He brought to the task the measured dignity which characterized all his actions. A left jab from him had all the majesty of a formal declaration of war. If he was a trifle slow in his movements for a pastime which demands a certain agility from its devotees, he at least got plenty of exercise and did himself a great deal of good.

He was perspiring freely as he took off the gloves. A shower-bath, followed by brisk massage at the energetic hands of Steve, made him feel better than he had imagined he could feel after that night of spiritual storm and stress. He was glowing as he put on his clothes, and a certain high resolve which had come to him in the night watches now returned with doubled force.

"Dingle," he said, "how did I seem to-day?"

"Fine," answered Steve courteously. "You're gettin' to be a regular terror."

"You think I shape well?"

"Sure."

"I am glad. This morning I am going to thrash a man within an inch of his life."

"What!"

Steve spun round. Bailey's face was set and determined.

"You are?" said Steve feebly.

"I am."

"What's he been doing to you?"

"I am afraid I cannot tell you that. But he richly deserves what he will get."

Steve eyed him with affectionate interest.

"Well, ain't you the wildcat!" he said. "Who'd have thought it? I'd always had you sized up as a kind o' placid guy."

"I can be roused."

"Gee, can't I see it! But, say, what sort of a gook is this gink, anyway?"

"In what respect?"

"Well, I mean is he a heavy or a middle or a welter or what? It makes a kind o' difference, you know."

"I cannot say. I have not seen him."

"What! Not seen him? Then how's there this fuss between you?"

"That is a matter into which I cannot go."

"Well, what's his name, then? Maybe I know him. I know a few good people in this burg."

"I have no objection to telling you that. He is an artist, and his name is—his name is—"

Wrinkles appeared in Bailey's forehead. His eyes bulged anxiously behind their glasses.

"I've forgotten," he said blankly.

"For the love of Mike! Know where he lives?"

"I am afraid not."

Steve patted him kindly on the shoulder.

"Take my advice, bo," he said. "Let the poor fellow off this time."

And so it came about that Bailey, instead of falling upon Kirk Winfield, hailed a taxicab and drove to the apartment of Mrs. Lora Delane Porter.

CHAPTER V

WHEREIN OPPOSITES AGREE

THE maid who opened the door showed a reluctance to let Bailey in. She said that Mrs. Porter was busy with her writing and had given orders that she was not to be disturbed.

Nothing could have infuriated Bailey more. He, Bailey Bannister, was to be refused admittance because this preposterous woman wished to write! It was the duty of all decent citizens to stop her writing. If it had not been for her and her absurd books Ruth would never have made it necessary for him to pay this visit at all.

"Kindly take my card to Mrs. Porter and tell her that I must see her at once on a matter of the utmost urgency," he directed.

The domestic workers of America had not been trained to stand up against Bailey's grand manner. The maid vanished meekly with the card, and presently returned and requested him to step in.

Bailey found himself in a comfortable room, more like a man's study than a woman's boudoir. Books lined the walls. The furniture was strong and plain. At the window, on a swivel-chair before a roll-top desk, Mrs. Porter sat writing, her back to the door.

"The gentleman, ma'am," announced the maid.

"Sit down," said his aunt, without looking round or ceasing to write.

The maid went out. Bailey sat down. The gentle squeak of the quill pen continued.

Bailey coughed.

"I have called this morning—"

The left hand of the writer rose and waggled itself irritably above her left shoulder.

"Aunt Lora," spoke Bailey sternly.

"Shish!" said the authoress. Only that and nothing more. Bailey, outraged, relapsed into silence. The pen squeaked on.

After what seemed to Bailey a considerable time, the writing ceased. It was succeeded by the sound of paper vigorously blotted. Then, with startling suddenness, Mrs. Porter whirled round on the swivel-chair, tilted it back, and faced him.

"Well, Bailey?" she said.

She looked at Bailey. Bailey looked at her. Her eyes had the curious effect of driving out of his head what he had intended to say.

"Well?" she said again.

He tried to remember the excellent opening speech which he had prepared in the cab.

"Good gracious, Bailey!" cried Mrs. Porter, "you have not come here and ruined my morning's work for the pleasure of looking at me surely? Say something."

Bailey found his voice.

"I have called to see Ruth, who, I am informed, is with you."

"She is in her room. I made her breakfast in bed. Is there any message I can give her?"

Bailey suddenly remembered the speech he had framed in the cab.

"Aunt Lora," he said, "I am sorry to have to intrude upon you at so early an hour, but it is imperative that I see Ruth and ask her to explain the meaning of a most disturbing piece of news that has come to my ears."

Mrs. Porter did not appear to have heard him.

"A man of your height should weigh more," she said. "What is your weight?"

"My weight; beside the point—"

"Your weight is under a hundred and forty pounds, and it ought to be over a hundred and sixty. Eat more. Avoid alcohol. Keep regular hours."

"Aunt Lora!"

"Well?"

"I wish to see my sister."

"You will have to wait. What did you wish to see her about?"

"That is a matter that concerns— No! I will tell you, for I believe you to be responsible for the whole affair."

"Well?"

"Last night, quite by chance, I found out that Ruth has for some time been paying visits to the studio of an artist."

Mrs. Porter nodded.

"Quite right. Mr. Kirk Winfield. She is going to marry him."

Bailey's hat fell to the floor. His stick followed. His mouth opened widely. His glasses shot from his nose and danced madly at the end of their string.

"What!"

"It will be a most suitable match in every way," said Mrs. Porter.

Bailey bounded to his feet.

"It's incredible!" he shouted. "It's ridiculous! It's abominable! It's—it's incredible!"

Mrs. Porter gazed upon his transports with about the same amount of interest which she would have bestowed upon a whirling dervish at Coney Island.

"You have not seen Mr. Winfield, I gather?"

"When I do, he will have reason to regret it. I—"

"Sit down."

Bailey sat down.

"Ruth and Mr. Winfield are both perfect types. Mr. Winfield is really a splendid specimen of a man. As to his intelligence, I say nothing. I have ceased to expect intelligence in man, and I am grateful for the smallest grain. But physically, he is magnificent. I could not wish dear Ruth a better husband."

Bailey had pulled himself together with a supreme effort and had achieved a frozen calm.

"Such a marriage is, of course, out of the question," he said.

"Why?"

"My sister cannot marry a—a nobody, an outsider—"

"Mr. Winfield is not a nobody. He is an extraordinarily healthy young man."

"Are you aware that Ruth, if she had wished, could have married a prince?"

"She told me. A little rat of a man, I understood. She had far too much sense to do any such thing. She has a conscience. She knows what she owes to the future of the—"

"Bah!" cried Bailey rudely.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Porter, "that, like most men, you care nothing for the future of the race? You are not interested in eugenics?"

Bailey quivered with fury at the word, but said nothing.

"If you have ever studied even so elementary a subject as the color heredity of the Andalusian fowl—"

The color heredity of the Andalusian fowl was too much for Bailey.

"I decline to discuss any such drivel," he said, rising. "I came here to see Ruth, and—"

"And here she is," said Mrs. Porter.

The door opened, and Ruth appeared. She looked, to Bailey, insufferably radiant and pleased with herself.

"Bailey!" she cried. "Whatever brings my little Bailey here, when he ought to be working like a good boy in Wall Street?"

"I will tell you." Bailey's demeanor was portentous.

"He's frowning," said Ruth. "You have been stirring his hidden depths, Aunt Lora!"

Bailey coughed.

"Ruth!"

"Bailey, *don't!* You don't know how terrible you look when you're roused."

"Ruth, kindly answer me one question. Aunt Lora informs me that you are going to marry this man Winfield. Is it or is it not true?"

"Of course it's true."

Bailey drew in his breath. He gazed coldly at Ruth, bowed to Mrs. Porter, and smoothed the nap of his hat.

"Very good," he said stonily. "I shall now call upon this Mr. Winfield and thrash him." With that he walked out of the room.

He directed his cab to the nearest hotel, looked up Kirk's address in the telephone-book, and ten minutes later was ringing the studio bell.

A look of relief came into George Pennicut's eyes as he opened the door. To George nowadays every ring at the bell meant a possible visit from Lora Delane Porter.

"Is Mr. Kirk Winfield at home?" inquired Bailey.

"Yes, sir. Who shall I say, sir?"

"Kindly tell Mr. Winfield that Mr. Bannister wishes to speak to him."

"Yes, sir. Will you step this way, sir?"

Bailey stepped that way.

While Bailey was driving to the studio in his taxicab, Kirk, in boxing trunks and a sleeveless vest, was engaged on his daily sparring exercise with Steve Dingle.

This morning Steve seemed to be amused at something. As they rested, at the conclusion of their fifth and final round, Kirk perceived that he was chuckling, and asked the reason.

"Why, say," explained Steve, "I was only thinking that it takes all kinds of ivory domes to make a nuttery. I ran across a new brand of simp this morning. Just before I come to you I'm scheduled to show up at one of these Astorbilt homes t'other side of the park. First I mix it with the old man, then son and heir blows in and I attend to him.

" Well, this morning son acts like he's all worked up. He's one of these half-portion Willie-boys with Chippendale legs, but he throws out a line of talk that would make you wonder if it's safe to let him run around loose. Says his mind's made up; he's going to thrash a gink within an inch of his life; going to muss up his features so bad he'll have to have 'em replanted.

" 'Why?' I says. 'Never you mind,' says he. 'Well, who is he?' I asks. What do you think happens then? He thinks hard for a spell, rolls his eyes, and says: 'Search me. I've forgotten.' 'Know where he lives?' I asks him. 'Nope,' he says.

" Can you beat it! Seems to me if I had a kink in my coco that big I'd phone to an alienist and have myself measured for a strait-jacket. Gee! You meet all kinds, going around the way I do."

Kirk laughed and lit a cigarette.

" If you want to use the shower, Steve," he said, " you'd better get up there now. I sha'n't be ready yet a while. Then, if this is one of your energetic mornings and you would care to give me a rub-down—"

" Sure," said Steve obligingly. He picked up his clothes and went up-stairs to the bath-room, which, like the bedrooms, opened onto the gallery. Kirk threw himself on the couch, fixed his eyes on the ceiling, and began to think of Ruth.

" Mr. Bannister," announced George Pennicut at the door.

Kirk was on his feet in one bound. The difference, to a man whose mind is far away, between " Mr. Bannister " and " Miss Bannister " is not great, and his first impression was that it was Ruth who had arrived.

He was acutely conscious of his costume, and was quite relieved when he saw, not Ruth, but a severe-looking young man, who advanced upon him in a tight-lipped, pop-eyed manner that suggested dislike and hostility. The visitor was a complete stranger to him, but, his wandering wits returning to their duties, he deduced that this must be one of Ruth's relatives.

It is a curious fact that the possibility of Ruth having other relatives than Mrs. Porter had not occurred to him till now. She herself filled his mind to such an extent that he had never speculated on any possible family that might be attached to her. To him Ruth was Ruth. He accepted the fact that she was Mrs. Porter's niece. That she might also be somebody's daughter or sister had not struck him. The look on Bailey's face somehow brought it home to him that the world was about to step in and complicate the idyllic simplicity of his wooing.

Bailey, meanwhile, as Kirk's hundred and eighty pounds of bone and muscle detached themselves from the couch and loomed up massively before him, was conscious of a weakening of his determination to inflict bodily chastisement. The truth of Steve's remark, that it makes a difference whether one's intended victim is a heavyweight, a middle, or a welter, came upon him with some force.

Kirk, in a sleeveless vest that showed up his chest and shoulders, was not an inviting spectacle for a man intending assault and battery. Bailey decided to confine himself to words. There was nothing to be gained by a vulgar brawl. A dignified man of the world avoided violence.

" Mr. Winfield?"

" Mr. Bannister?"

It was at this point that Steve, having bathed and dressed, came out on the gallery. The voices below halted him, and the sound of Bailey's decided him to remain where he was. Steve was not above human curiosity, and he was anxious to know the reason of Bailey's sudden appearance.

" That is my name. It is familiar to you. My sister," said Bailey bitterly, " has made it so."

" Won't you sit down?" said Kirk.

" No, thank you. I will not detain you long, Mr. Winfield."

" My dear fellow! There's no hurry. Will you have a cigarette?"

" No, thank you."

Kirk was puzzled by his visitor's manner. So, unseen in the shadows of the gallery, was Steve.

" I can say what I wish to say in two words, Mr. Winfield," said Bailey. " This marriage is quite out of the question."

" Eh?"

" My father would naturally never consent to it. As soon as he hears of what has happened he will forbid it absolutely. Kindly dismiss from your mind entirely the idea that my sister will ever be permitted to marry you, Mr. Winfield."

Steve, in the gallery, with difficulty suppressed a whoop of surprise. Kirk laughed ruefully.

"Aren't you a little premature, Mr. Bannister? Aren't you taking a good deal for granted?"

"In what way?"

"Well, that Miss Bannister cares the slightest bit for me, for instance; that I've one chance in a million of ever getting her to care the slightest bit for me?"

Bailey was disgusted at this futile attempt to hide the known facts of the case from him.

"You need not trouble to try and fool me, Mr. Winfield," he said tartly. "I know everything. I have just seen my sister, and she told me herself in so many words that she intended to marry you."

To his amazement he found his hand violently shaken.

"My dear old man!" Kirk was stammering in his delight. "My dear old sport, you don't know what a weight you've taken off my mind. You know how it is. A fellow falls in love and instantly starts thinking he hasn't a chance on earth. I hadn't a notion she felt that way about me. I'm not fit to shine her shoes. My dear old man, if you hadn't come and told me this I never should have had the nerve to say a word to her.

"You're a corker. You've changed everything. You'll have to excuse me. I must go to her. I can't wait a minute. I must rush and dress. Make yourself at home here. Have you breakfasted? George! George! Say, George, I've got to rush away. See that Mr. Bannister has everything he wants. Get him some breakfast. Good-by, old man." He gripped Bailey's hand once more. "You're all right. Good-by!"

He sprang for the staircase. George Pennicut turned to the speechless Bailey.

"How would it be if I made you a nice cup of hot tea and a rasher of 'am, sir?" he inquired with a kindly smile.

Bailey eyed him glassily, then found speech.

"Go to hell!" he shouted. He strode to the door and shot into the street, a seething volcano.

George, for his part, was startled, but polite.

"Yes, sir," he said. "Very good, sir," and withdrew.

Kirk, having reached the top of the stairs, had to check the wild rush he was making for the bath-room in order not to collide with Steve, whom he found waiting for him with outstretched hand and sympathetic excitement writ large upon his face.

"Excuse *me*, squire," said Steve, "I've been playing the part of Rubberneck Rupert in that little drama you've just been starring in. I just couldn't help listening. Say, this mitt's for you. Shake it! So you're going to marry Bailey's sister, Ruth, are you? You're the lucky guy. She's a queen!"

"Do *you* know her, Steve?"

"Do I know her! Didn't I tell you I was the tame physical instructor in that palace? I wish I had a dollar for every time I've thrown the medicine-ball at her. Why, I'm the guy that gave her that figure of hers. She don't come to me regular, like Bailey and the old man, but do I know her? I should say I did know her."

Kirk shook his hand.

"You're all right, Steve!" he said huskily, and vanished into the bath-room. A sound as of a tropical deluge came from within.

Steve hammered upon the door. The downpour ceased.

"Say!" called Steve.

"Hello?"

"I don't want to discourage you, squire, but—"

The door opened and Kirk's head appeared.

"What's the matter?"

"Well, you heard what Bailey said?"

"About his father?"

"Sure. It goes."

Kirk came out into the gallery, toweling himself vigorously.

"Who *is* her father?" he asked, seating himself on the rail.

"He's a son of a gun," said Steve with emphasis. "As rich as John D. pretty nearly and about as chummy as a rattlesnake. Were you thinking of calling and asking him for a father's blessing?"

"Something of the sort, I suppose."

"Forget it! He'd give you the hook before you'd got through asking if you might call him daddy."

"You're comforting, Steve. They call you Little Sunbeam at home, don't they?"

"Hell!" said Steve warmly, "I'm not shooting this at you just to make you feel bad. I gotta reason. I want to make you see this ain't going to be no society walkover, with the Four Hundred looking on from the pews and poppa signing checks in the background. Say, did I ever tell you how I beat Kid Mitchell?"

"Does it apply to the case in hand?"

"Does it what to the which?"

"Has it any bearing on my painful position? I only ask, because that's what is interesting me most just now, and, if

"I HAVE JUST SEEN MY SISTER, AND SHE TOLD ME HERSELF THAT SHE INTENDED TO MARRY YOU"

you're going to change the subject, there's a chance that my attention may wander."

"Sure it does. It's a—what d'you call it when you pull something that's got another meaning tucked up its sleeve?"

"A parable?"

"That's right. A — what you said. Well, this Kid Mitchell was looked on as a coming champ in those days. He had cleaned up some good boys, while I had only gotten a rep about as big as a nickel with a hole in it. I guess I looked pie to him. He turkey-trotted up to me for the first round and stopped in front of me as if he was wondering what had blown in and whether the Gerry Society would stand for his hitting it. I could see him thinking 'This is too easy' as plain as if he'd said it. And then he took another peek at me, as much as to say, 'Well, let's get it over. Where shall I soak him first?' And while he's doing this I get in range and I put my left pretty smart into his lunch-wagon and I pick up my right off the carpet and hand it to him, and down he goes. And when he gets up again it's pretty nearly to-morrow morning and I've drawn the winner's end and gone home."

"And the moral?"

"Why, don't spar. Punch! Don't wait for the wallop. Give it."

"You mean?"

"Why, when old man Bannister says: 'Nix! You shall never marry my child!' come back at him by saying: 'Thanks very much, but I've just done it!'"

"Good Heavens, Steve!"

"You'll never win out else. You don't know old man Bannister. I do."

"But—"

The door-bell rang.

"Who on earth's that?" said Kirk. "It can't be Bailey back again."

"Good morning, Pennicut," spoke the clear voice of Mrs. Lora Delane Porter. "I wish to see Mr. Winfield."

"Yes, ma'am. He's up-stairs in 'is bath!"

"I will wait in the studio."

"Good Lord!" cried Kirk, bounding from his seat on the rail. "For Heaven's sake, Steve, go and talk to her while I dress. I'll be down in a minute."

"Sure. What's her name?"

"Mrs. Porter. You'll like her. Tell her all about yourself—where you were born, how much you are round the chest, what's your favorite breakfast-food. That's what she likes to chat about. And tell her I'll be down in a second."

Steve, reaching the studio, found Mrs. Porter examining the boxing-gloves which had been thrown on a chair.

"Eight-ounce, ma'am," he said genially, by way of introduction. "Kirk'll be lining up in a moment. He's getting into his rags."

Mrs. Porter looked at him with the gimlet stare which made her so intensely disliked by practically every man she knew.

"Are you a friend of Mr. Winfield?" she said.

"Sure. We just been spieling together up above. He sent me down to tell you he won't be long."

Mrs. Porter concluded her inspection.

"What is your name?"

"Dingle, ma'am."

"You are extraordinarily well developed. You have unusually long arms for a man of your height."

"Yep. I got a pretty good reach."

"Are you an artist?"

"A which?"

"An artist. A painter."

Steve smiled broadly.

"I've been called a good many things, but no one's ever handed me that. No, ma'am, I'm a has-been."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Granted."

"What did you say you were?" asked Mrs. Porter after a pause.

"A has-been. I used to be a middle, but mother kicked, and I quit. All through taking a blue eye home! Wouldn't that jar you?"

"I have no doubt you intend to be explicit—"

"Not on your life!" protested Steve. "I may be a roughneck, but I've got me manners. I wouldn't get explicit with a lady."

Mrs. Porter sat down.

"We appear to be talking at cross-purposes," she said. "I still do not gather what your profession is or was."

"Why, ain't I telling you? I used to be a middle—"

"What is a middle?"

"Why, it's in between the light-heavies and the welters. I was a welter when I broke into the fighting game, but—"

"Now I understand. You are a pugilist?"

"Used to be. But mother kicked."

"Kicked whom?"

"You don't get me, ma'am. When I say she kicked, I mean my blue eye threw a scare into her, and she put a crimp in my career. Made me quit when I should have been champ in another couple of fights."

"I am afraid I cannot follow these domestic troubles of yours. And why do you speak of your blue eye? Your eyes are brown."

"This one wasn't. It was the fattest blue eye you ever seen. I ran up against a short right hook. I put him out next round, ma'am, mind you, but that didn't help me any with mother. Directly she seen me blue eye she said: 'That'll be all from you, Steve. You stop it this minute.' So I quit. But gee! It's tough on a fellow to have to sit out of the game and watch a bunch of cheeses like this new crop of middleweights swelling around and calling themselves fighters when they couldn't lick a postage-stamp, not if it was properly trained. Hell! Beg pardon, ma'am."

"I find you an interesting study, Mr. Dingle," said Mrs. Porter thoughtfully. "I have never met a pugilist before. Do you box with Mr. Winfield?"

"Sure. Kirk and me go five rounds every morning."

"You have been boxing with him today? Then perhaps you can tell me if an absurd young man in eye-glasses has called here yet? He is wearing a gray—"

"Do you mean Bailey, ma'am? Bailey Bannister?"

"You know my nephew, Mr. Dingle?"

"Sure. I box with him every morning."

"I never expected to hear that my nephew Bailey did anything so sensible as to take regular exercise. He does not look as if he did."

"He certainly is a kind o' half-portion, ma'am. But say, if he's your nephew, Miss Ruth's your niece."

"Perfectly correct."

"Then you know all about this business?"

"Which business, Mr. Dingle?"

"Why, Kirk and Miss Ruth."

Mrs. Porter raised her eyebrows.

"Really, Mr. Dingle! Has Mr. Winfield made you his confidant?"

"How's that?"

"Has Mr. Winfield told you about my niece and himself?"

"Hell, no! You don't find a real person like Kirk shooting off his head about that kind of thing. I had it from Bailey."

"From Bailey?"

"Surest thing you know. He blew in here and shouted it all out at the top of his voice."

"Indeed! I was wondering if he had arrived yet. He left my apartment saying he was going to thrash Mr. Winfield. I came here to save him from getting hurt. Was there any trouble?"

"Not so's you could notice it. I guess when he'd taken a slant at Kirk he thought he wouldn't bother to swat him. Say, ma'am—"

"Well?"

"Whose corner are you in for this scrap?"

"I don't understand you."

"Well, are you rooting for Kirk, or are you holding the towel for old man Bannister?"

"You mean, do I wish Mr. Winfield to marry my niece?"

"You're hep."

"Most certainly I do. It was I who brought them together."

"Bully for you! Well, say, I just been shooting the dope into Kirk up-stairs. I been—you didn't happen to read the report of a scrap I once had with a gazook called Kid Mitchell, did you, ma'am?"

"I seldom, I may say never, read the sporting section of the daily papers."

Steve looked at her in honest wonder.

"For the love of Pete! What else do you find to read in 'em?" he said. "Well, I was telling Kirk about it. The Kid came at me to soak me, but I soaked him first and put him out. It's the only thing to do, ma'am, when you're up against it. Get in the first wallop before the other guy can get himself set for his punch. 'Kirk,' I says, 'don't you wait for old man Bannister to tell you you can't marry Miss Ruth. Marry her before he can say it.' I wish you'd tell him the same thing, ma'am. You know the old man as well as I do—better, I guess—and you know that Kirk ain't got a chance in a million with him if he don't rush him. Ain't that right?"

"Mr. Dingle," said Mrs. Porter, "I should like to shake you by the hand. It is amazing to me to find such sound sense in a man. You have expressed my view exactly. If I have any influence with Mr.

Winfield, he shall marry my niece to-day. You are a man of really exceptional intelligence, Mr. Dingle."

"Aw, check it with your hat, ma'am!" murmured Steve modestly. "Nix on the bouquets! I'm only a roughneck. But I fall for Miss Ruth, and there ain't many like Kirk, so I'd like to see them happy. It would sure get my goat the worst way to have the old man gum the game for them."

"I cannot understand a word you say," said Mrs. Porter, "but I fancy we mean the same thing. Here comes Mr. Winfield at last. I will speak to him at once."

"Spiel away, ma'am," said Steve. "The floor's yours."

Kirk entered the studio.

CHAPTER VI

BREAKING THE NEWS

Old John Bannister returned that night. Learning from Bailey's trembling lips the tremendous events that had been taking place in his absence, he was first irritated, then coldly amused. His coolness dampened, while it comforted, Bailey.

A bearer of sensational tidings likes to spread a certain amount of dismay and terror; but, on the other hand, it was a relief to him to find that his father appeared to consider trivial a crisis which, to Bailey, had seemed a disaster without parallel in the annals of American social life.

"She said she was going to *marry* him!"

Old Bannister opened the nut-cracker mouth that always had the appearance of crushing something. His pale eyes glowed for an instant.

"Did she?" he said.

"She seemed very—ah—determined."

"*Did* she!"

Silence falling like a cloud at this point, Bailey rightly conjectured that the audience was at an end and left the room. His father bit the end off a cigar and began to smoke.

Smoking, he reviewed the situation, and his fighting spirit rose to grapple with it. He was not sorry that this had happened. His was a patriarchal mind, and he welcomed opportunities of exercising his authority over his children. It had always been his policy to rule them masterfully, and he had often resented the fact that his daughter, by the nature of things, was to a great extent outside his immediate rule.

During office hours business took him away from her. The sun never set on his empire over Bailey, but it needed a definite crisis like the present one to enable him to jerk at the reins which guided Ruth, and he was glad of the chance to make his power felt.

The fact that this affair brought him into immediate contact with Mrs. Porter added to his enjoyment. Of all the people, men or women, with whom his business or social life had brought him into conflict, she alone had fought him squarely and retired with the honors of war. When his patriarchal mind had led him to bully his late wife, it was Mrs. Porter who had fought her cause. It was Mrs. Porter who openly expressed her contempt for his money and certain of his methods of making it. She was the only person in his immediate sphere over whom he had no financial hold.

He was a man who liked to be surrounded by dependents, and Mrs. Porter stoutly declined to be a dependent. She moved about the world, blunt and self-sufficing, and he hated her as he hated no one else. The thought that she had now come to grips with him and that he could beat her in open fight was pleasant to him. All his life, except in his conflicts with her, he had won. He meant to win now.

Bailey's apprehensions amused him. He had a thorough contempt for all actors, authors, musicians, and artists, whom he classed together in one group as men who did not count, save in so far as they gave mild entertainment to the men who, like himself, did count. The idea of anybody taking them seriously seemed too fantastic to be considered.

Of affection for his children he had little. Bailey was useful in the office, and Ruth ornamental at home. They satisfied him. He had never troubled to study their characters. It had never occurred to him to wonder if they were fond of him. They formed a necessary part of his household, and beyond that he was not interested in them. If he had ever thought about Ruth's nature, he had dismissed her as a feminine counterpart of Bailey, than whom no other son and heir in New York behaved so exactly as a son and heir should.

That Ruth, even under the influence of

Lora Delane Porter, should have been capable of her present insubordination, was surprising, but the thing was too trivial to be a source of anxiety. The mischief could be checked at once before it amounted to anything.

Bailey had not been gone long before Ruth appeared. She stood in the doorway looking at him for a moment. Her face was pale and her eyes bright. She was breathing quickly.

" Are you busy, father? I—I want to tell you something."

John Bannister smiled. He had a wintry smile, a sort of muscular affection of the mouth, to which his eyes contributed nothing. He had made up his mind to be perfectly calm and pleasant with Ruth. He had read in novels and seen on the stage situations of this kind, where the father had stormed and blustered. The foolishness of such a policy amused him. A strong man had no need to behave like that.

" I think I have heard it already," he said. " I have just been seeing Bailey."

" What did Bailey tell you, father?"

" That you fancied yourself in love with some actor or artist or other whose name I have forgotten."

" It is not fancy. I do love him."

" Yes?"

There was a pause.

" Are you very angry, father?"

" Why should I be? Let's talk it over quietly. There's no need to make a tragedy of it."

" I'm glad you feel like that, father."

John Bannister lit another cigar.

" Tell me all about it," he said.

Ruth found herself surprisingly near tears. She had come into the room with every nerve in her body braced for a supreme struggle. Her father's unexpected gentleness weakened her, exactly as he had foreseen. The plan of action which he had determined upon was that of the wrestler who yields instead of resisting, in order to throw an antagonist off his balance.

" How did it begin?" he asked.

" Well," said Ruth, " it began when Aunt Lora took me to his studio."

" Yes, I heard that it was she who set the thing going. She is a friend of this fellow—what is his name?"

" Kirk Winfield. Yes, she seemed to know him quite well."

" And then?"

In spite of her anxiety, Ruth smiled.

" Well, that's all," she said. " I just fell in love with him."

Mr. Bannister nodded.

" You just fell in love with him," he repeated. " Pretty quick work, wasn't it?"

" I suppose it was."

" You just took one look at him and saw he was the affinity, eh?"

" I suppose so."

" And what did he do? Was he equally sudden?"

Ruth laughed. She was feeling quite happy now.

" He would have like to be, poor dear, but he felt he had to be cautious and prepare the way before telling me. If it hadn't been for Bailey, he might be doing it still. Apparently, Bailey went to him and said I had said I was going to marry him, and Kirk came flying round, and—well, then it was all right."

Mr. Bannister drew thoughtfully at his cigar. He was silent for a few moments.

" Well, my dear," he said at last. " I think you had better consider the engagement broken off."

Ruth looked at him quickly. He still smiled, but his eyes were cold and hard. She realized suddenly that she had been played with, that all this kindliness and amiability had been merely a substitute for the storm which she had expected. After all, it was to be war between them, and she braced herself for it.

" Father!" she cried.

Mr. Bannister continued to puff serenely at his cigar.

" We needn't get worked up about it," he said. " Let's keep right on talking it over quietly."

" Very well," said Ruth. " But, after what you have just said, what is there to talk over?"

" You might be interested to hear my reasons for saying it."

" And I will argue my side."

Mr. Bannister waved his hand gently.

" You don't have to argue. You just listen."

Ruth bit her lip.

" Well?"

" In the first place," said her father, " about this young man. What is he? Bailey says he is an artist. Well, what has he ever done? Why don't I know his name? I buy a good many pictures, but I don't remember ever signing a check for one of his. I read the magazines now and then, but I can't recall seeing his signature to any of the illustrations. How does he live, anyway, without going into the question of how he intends to support a wife?"

"Aunt Lora told me he has private means."

"How much?"

"Five thousand dollars a year."

"Exactly the amount necessary to let him live without working. I have him placed now. I know his type. I could show you a thousand men in this city in exactly the same position. They don't starve and they don't work. This young man of yours is a loafer."

"Well?"

Ruth's voice was quiet, but a faint color had crept into her face and her eyes were blazing.

"Now perhaps you would care to hear what I think of his principles. How do you feel that he comes out of this business? Does he show to advantage? Isn't there just a suspicion of underhandedness about his behavior?"

"No."

"No? He lets you pay these secret visits—"

Ruth interrupted.

"There was nothing secret about them —to him. Aunt Lora brought me to the studio in the first place, and she kept on bringing me. I don't suppose it ever occurred to Kirk to wonder who I was and who my father might be. He has been perfectly straight. If you like to say I have been underhanded, I admit it. I have. More so than you imagine. I just wanted him, and I didn't care for anything except that."

"It did not strike you that you owed anything to me, for instance?"

"No."

"I should have thought that, as your father, I had certain claims."

Ruth was silent.

Mr. Bannister sighed.

"I thought you were fond of me, Ruth," he said wistfully. It was the wrestler yielding instead of resisting. Ruth's hard composure melted instantly. She flung her arms round his neck in a burst of remorseful affection.

"Of course I am, father dear. You're making this awfully hard for me."

Mr. Bannister chuckled inwardly. It seemed to him that victory was in sight. He always won, he told himself, always.

"I only want you to be sensible."

Ruth stiffened at the word. It jarred upon her. She felt that they were leagues apart, that they could never be in sympathy with each other.

"Father," she said.

"Yes?"

"Would you like to see Kirk?"

"I have been wondering when he was going to appear on the scene. I always thought it was customary on these occasions for the young man to present himself in person, and not let the lady fight his battles for him. Is this Mr. Winfield a little deficient in nerve?"

Ruth flushed angrily.

"I particularly asked Kirk not to come here before I had seen you. I insisted on it. Naturally, he wanted to."

"Of course!"

There was a sneer in his voice which he did not try to hide. It flicked Ruth like a whip. Her painfully preserved restraint broke up under it.

"Do you think Kirk is afraid of you, father?"

"It crossed my mind."

"He is not."

"I have only your word for it."

"You can have his if you want it. There is the telephone. You can have him here in ten minutes if you want to see him."

"A very good idea. But, as it happens, I do not want to see him. There is no necessity. His views on this matter do not interest me. I—"

There was a hurried knock at the door. Bailey burst in, ruffled and wild as to the eyes.

"Father," he cried, "I don't want to interrupt you, but that infernal woman, Aunt Lora, has arrived, and says she won't go till she has seen you. She's downstairs now."

"Not now," said Lora Delane Porter, moving him to one side and entering the room. "I thought it would be a comfort to you, Ruth, to have me with you to help explain exactly how matters stand. Good evening, John. Go away, Bailey. Now let us discuss things quietly."

"She is responsible for the whole thing, father," cried Bailey.

Mr. Bannister rose.

"There is nothing to discuss," he said shortly. "I have no wish to speak to you at all. As you appear to have played a large part in this affair, I may as well tell you that it is settled. Ruth will not marry Mr. Winfield."

Lora Delane Porter settled herself comfortably in a chair. She drew off her gloves and placed them on the table.

"Please ask that boy Bailey to go," she said. "He annoys me. I cannot marshal my thoughts in his presence."

Quelled by her eye, Bailey removed himself. His father remained standing. Ruth, who had risen at her aunt's entry, sat down again. Mrs. Porter looked round the room with some approval.

"You have a nice taste in pictures, John," she said. "That is a Corôt, surely, above the mantelpiece?"

"Will you—"

"But about this little matter. You dislike the idea of Ruth marrying Mr. Winfield? Have you seen Mr. Winfield?"

"I have not."

"Then how can you possibly decide whether he is a fit husband for Ruth?"

"I know all about him."

"What do you know?"

"What Ruth has told me. That he is a loafer who pretends to be an artist."

"He is a poor artist. I grant you that. His drawing is weak. But are you aware that he is forty-three inches round the chest, six feet tall, and in perfect physical condition?"

"What has that to do with it?"

"Everything. You have not read my 'Principles of Selection'?"

"I have not."

"I will send you a copy to-morrow."

"I will burn it directly it arrives."

"Then you will miss a great deal of valuable information," said Mrs. Porter tranquilly.

There was a pause. John Bannister glared furiously at Mrs. Porter, but her gaze was moving easily about the room, taking in each picture in turn in a leisurely inspection.

An exclamation from Ruth broke the silence, a sharp cry like that of an animal in pain. She sprang up, her face working, her eyes filled with tears.

"I can't stand it!" she cried. "I can't stand it any longer! Father, Kirk and I were married this afternoon."

Mrs. Porter went quickly to her and put her arm round her. Ruth was sobbing helplessly. The strain had broken her. John Bannister's face was leaden. The veins stood out on his forehead. His mouth twisted dumbly.

Mrs. Porter led Ruth gently to the door and pushed her out. Then she closed it and turned to him.

"So now you know, John," she said. "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

Self-control was second nature with John Bannister. For years he had cultivated it as a commercial asset. Often a fortune had depended on his mastery of his emotions. Now, in an instant, he had himself under control once more. His face resumed its normal expression of cold impassiveness. Only his mouth twitched a little.

"Well?" asked Mrs. Porter.

"Take her away," he said quietly. "Take her out of here. Let her go to him. I have done with her."

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Porter, and left the room.

CHAPTER VII

SUFFICIENT UNTO THEMSELVES

SOME months after John Bannister had spoken his ultimatum in the library two drought-stricken men met on the Rialto. It was a close June evening, full of thirst.

"I could do with a drink," said the first man. "Several."

"My tongue is black clear down to the roots," said the second.

"Let's go up to Kirk Winfield's," proposed the first man, inspired.

"Not for me," said the other briefly. "Haven't you heard about Kirk? He's married!"

"I know—but—"

"And when I say married, I mean *married*. She's old John Bannister's daughter, you know, and I guess she inherits her father's character. She's what I call a determined girl. She seems to have made up her mind that the old crowd that used to trail around the studio aren't needed any longer, and they've been hitting the sidewalk on one ear ever since the honeymoon.

"If you want to see her in action, go up there now. She'll be perfectly sweet and friendly, but somehow you'll get the notion that you don't want to go there again, and that she can bear up if you don't. It's something in her manner. I guess it's a trick these society girls learn. You've seen a bouncer handling a souse. He doesn't rough-house him. He just puts his arm round his waist and kind of suggests he should leave the place. Well, it's like that."

"But doesn't Kirk kick? He used to like having us around."

His friend laughed.

"Kick? Kirk? You should see him! He just sits there waiting for you to go, and, when you do go, shuts the door on you so quick you have to jump to keep from getting your coat caught in it. I tell you, those two are about all the company either of them needs. They've got the Newlyweds licked to a whisper."

"It's always the best fellows that get it worse," said the other philosophically, "and it's always the fellows you think are safe, too. I could have bet on Kirk. Six months ago I'd have given you any odds you wanted that he would never marry."

"And I wouldn't have taken you. It's always the way."

The criticisms of the two thirsty men, though prejudiced, were accurate. Marriage had undeniably wrought changes in Kirk Winfield. It had blown up, decentralized, and rearranged his entire scheme of life.

Kirk's was one of those natures that run to extremes. He had been a whole-hearted bachelor, and he was assuredly a much-married married man. For the first six months Ruth was almost literally his whole world. His friends, the old brigade of the studio, had dropped away from him in a body. They had visited the studio once or twice at first, but after that had mysteriously disappeared. He was too engrossed in his happiness to speculate on the reasons for this defection: he only knew that he was glad of it.

Their visits had not been a success. Conversation had flowed fitfully. Some sixth sense told him that Ruth, though charming to them all, had not liked them; and he himself was astonished to find what dull dogs they really were. It was odd how out of sympathy he felt with them. They seemed so unnecessary: yet what a large part of his life they had once made up.

Something had come between him and them. What it was he did not know.

Ruth could have told him. She was the angel with the flaming sword who guarded their paradise. Marriage was causing her to make unexpected discoveries with regard to herself. Before she had always looked on herself as a rather unusually reasonable, and certainly not a jealous, woman. But now she was filled with an active dislike for these quite harmless young men who came to try and share Kirk with her.

She knew it was utterly illogical. A man must have friends. Life could not be forever a hermitage of two. She tried to analyze her objection to these men, and came to the conclusion that it was the fact that they had known Kirk before she did that caused it.

She made a compromise with herself. Kirk should have friends, but they must be new ones. In a little while, when this crazy desire to keep herself and him alone together in a world of their own should have left her, they would begin to build up a circle. But these men whose vocabulary included the words "Do you remember?" must be eliminated, one and all.

Kirk, blissfully unconscious that his future was being arranged for him and the steering-wheel of his life quietly taken out of his hands, passed his days in a state of almost painful happiness. It never crossed his mind that he had ceased to be master of his fate and captain of his soul. The reins were handled so gently that he did not feel them. It seemed to him that he was traveling of his own free will along a pleasant path selected by himself.

He saw his friends go from him without a regret. Perhaps at the bottom of his heart he had always had a suspicion of contempt for them. He had taken them on their surface value, as amusing fellows who were good company of an evening. There was not one of them whom he had ever known as real friends know each other—not one, except Hank Jardine; and Hank had yet to be subjected to the acid test of the new conditions.

There were moments when the thought of Hank threw a shadow across his happiness. He could let these others go, but Hank was different. And something told him that Ruth would not like Hank.

But these shadows were not frequent. Ruth filled his life too completely to allow him leisure to brood on possibilities of future trouble.

Looking back, it struck him that on their wedding-day they had been almost strangers. They had taken each other blindly, trusting to instinct. Since then he had been getting to know her. It was astonishing how much there was to know. There was a fresh discovery to be made about her every day. She was a perpetually recurring miracle.

The futility of his old life made him wince whenever he dared think of it. How he had drifted, a useless log on a sluggish current!

He was certainly a whole-hearted convert. As to Saul of Tarsus, so to him there had come a sudden blinding light. He could hardly believe that he was the same person who had scoffed at the idea of a man giving up his life to one woman and being happy. But then the abstract wife had been a pale, bloodless fantom, and Ruth was real.

It was the realness of her that kept him in a state of perpetual amazement. To see her moving about the studio, to touch her, to look at her across the dinner-table, to wake in the night and hear her breathing at his side. . . . It seemed to him that centuries might pass, yet these things would still be wonderful.

And always in his heart there was the gratitude for what she had done for him. She had given up everything to share his life. She had weighed him in the balance against wealth and comfort and her place among the great ones of the world, and had chosen him. There were times when the thought filled him with a kind of delirious pride: times, again, when he felt a grateful humility that made him long to fall down and worship this goddess who had stooped to him.

In a word, he was very young, very much in love, and for the first time in his life was living with every drop of blood in his veins.

Hank returned to New York in due course. He came to the studio the same night, and he had not been there five minutes before a leaden weight descended on Kirk's soul. It was as he had feared. Ruth did not like him.

Hank was not the sort of man who makes a universal appeal. Also, he was no ladies' man. He was long and lean and hard-bitted, and his supply of conventional small talk was practically non-existent. To get the best out of Hank, as has been said, you had to let him take his coat off and put his feet up on the back of a second chair and reconcile yourself to the pestiferous brand of tobacco which he affected.

Ruth conceded none of these things. Throughout the interview Hank sat bolt upright, tucking a pair of shoes of the dreadnaught class coyly underneath his chair, and drew suspiciously at Turkish cigarettes from Kirk's case. An air of constraint hung over the party. Again and again Kirk hoped that Hank would embark on the epic of his life, but shyness kept Hank dumb.

He had heard, on reaching New York, that Kirk was married, but he had learned no details, and had conjured up in his mind the vision of a jolly little girl of the Bohemian type, who would make a fuss over him as Kirk's oldest friend. Confronted with Ruth, he lost a nerve which had never before failed him. This gorgeous creature, he felt, would never put up with those racy descriptions of wild adventures which had endeared him to Kirk. As soon as he could decently do so, he left, and Kirk, returning to the studio after seeing him out, sat down moodily, trying to convince himself against his judgment that the visit had not been such a failure after all.

Ruth was playing the piano softly. She had turned out all the lights except one, which hung above her head, shining on her white arms as they moved. From where he sat Kirk could see her profile. Her eyes were half closed.

The sight of her, as it always did, sent a thrill through him, but he was conscious of an ache behind it. He had hoped so much that Hank would pass, and he knew that he had not. Why was it that two people so completely one as Ruth and himself could not see Hank with the same eyes?

He knew that she had thought him uncouth and impossible. Why could not Hank have exerted himself more, instead of sitting there in that stuffed way? Why could not Ruth have unbent? Why had not he himself done something to save the situation? Of the three, he blamed himself most. He was the one who should have taken the lead and made things pleasant for everybody instead of forcing out conversational platitudes.

Once or twice he had caught Hank's

eye, and had hated himself for understanding what it said and not being able to deny it. He had marked the end of their old relationship, the parting of the ways, and that a tragedy had been played out that night.

He found himself thinking of Hank as of a friend who had died. What times they had had! How smoothly they had got on together! He could not recall a single occasion on which they had fallen out, from the time when they had fought as boys at the prep school and cemented their friendship the next day. After that there had been periods when they had parted, sometimes for more than a year; but they had always come together again and picked up the threads as neatly as if there had been no gap in their intimacy.

He had gone to college: Hank had started on the roving life which suited his temperament. But they had never lost touch with each other. And now it was all over. They would meet again, but it would not be the same. The angel with the flaming sword stood between them.

For the first time since the delirium of marriage had seized upon him, Kirk was conscious of a feeling that all was not for the best in a best of all possible worlds, a feeling of regret, not that he had married—the mere thought would have been a blasphemy—but that marriage was such a complicated affair. He liked a calm life, free from complications, and now they were springing up on every side.

There was the matter of the models. Kirk had supposed that it was only in the comic papers that the artist's wife objected to his employing models. He had classed it with the mother-in-law joke, respecting it for its antiquity, but not imagining that it ever really happened. And Ruth had brought this absurd situation into the sphere of practical politics only a few days ago.

Since his marriage Kirk had dropped his work almost entirely. There had seemed to be no time for it. He liked to spend his days going round the stores with Ruth, buying her things, or looking in at the windows of Fifth Avenue shops and choosing what he would buy her when he had made his fortune. It was agreed upon between them that he was to make his fortune some day.

Kirk's painting had always been more of a hobby with him than a profession. He knew he had talent, but talent without hard work is a poor weapon, and he had always shirked hard work. He had an instinct for color, but his drawing was uncertain. He hated line-work, while knowing that only through steady practise at line-work could he achieve his artistic salvation. He was an amateur, and a lazy amateur.

But once in a while the work fever would grip him. It had gripped him a few days before Hank's visit. An idea for a picture had come to him, and he had set to work upon it with his usual impulsiveness.

This had involved the arrival of Miss Hilda Vince at the studio. There was no harm in Miss Vince. Her morals were irreproachable. She supported a work-shy father, and was engaged to be married to a young gentleman who traveled for a hat firm. But she was of a chatty disposition and no respecter of persons. She had posed frequently for Kirk in his bachelor days, and was accustomed to call him by his first name—a fact which Kirk had forgotten until Ruth, who had been out in the park, came in.

Miss Vince was saying at the moment: "So I says to her, 'Kirk's just phoned to me to sit.' 'What! Kirk!' she says. 'Is *he* doin' a bit of work for a change? Well, it's about time.' 'Aw, Kirk don't need to work,' I says. 'He's a plute. He's got it in gobs.' So—"

"I didn't know you were busy, dear," said Ruth. "I won't interrupt you."

She went out.

"Was that your wife?" inquired Miss Vince. "She's got a sweet face. Say, I read the piece about you and her in the paper. You certainly got a nerve, Kirk, breaking in on the millionaires that way."

That night Ruth spoke her mind about Miss Vince. It was in vain that Kirk touched on the work-shy father, dwelt feelingly on the young gentleman who traveled in hats. Ruth had made up her mind. It was thumbs down for Miss Vince.

"But if I'm to paint," said Kirk, "I must have models."

"There must be hundreds who don't call you by your Christian name."

"After about five minutes they all do," said Kirk. "It's a way they've got. They mean no harm."

Ruth then made this brilliant suggestion: "Kirk, dear, why don't you paint landscapes?"

In spite of his annoyance, he laughed.

"Why don't I paint landscapes, Ruth? Because I'm not a landscape painter, that's why."

"You could learn."

"It's a different branch of the trade altogether. You might just as well tell a catcher to pitch."

"Well, anyhow," retorted Ruth with spirit, "I won't have that Vince creature in the place again."

It was the first time she had jerked at the reins or given any sign that she was holding them, and undoubtedly this was the moment at which Kirk should have said: "My dearest, the time has come for me to state plainly that my soul is my own. I decline to give in to this absurd suggestion. Marriage is an affair of give and take, not a circus where one party holds the hoop while the other jumps through and shams dead. We shall be happier later on if we get this clearly into our heads now."

What he did say was: "Very well, dear. I'll write and tell her not to come."

He knew he was being abominably weak, but he did not care. He even felt a certain pleasure in his surrender. Big, muscular men are given to this feebleness with women. Hercules probably wore an idiotic grin of happiness when he spun wool for Omphale.

Since then the picture had been laid aside, but Kirk's desire to be up and at it had grown with inaction. When a lazy man does make up his mind to assail a piece of work, he is like a dog with a bone.

The music stopped. Ruth swung round.

"What are you dreaming about, Kirk?"

Kirk came to himself with a start.

"I was thinking of a lot of things. For one, about that picture of mine."

"What about it?"

"Well, when I was going to finish it."

"Why don't you?"

Kirk laughed.

"Where's my model? You've scared her up a tree, and I can't coax her down."

Ruth came over to him and sat down on a low chair at his side. She put her arm round his waist and rested her head in the hollow of his shoulder.

"Is he pining for his horrid Vince girl, the poor boy?"

"He certainly is," said Kirk. "Or, at any rate, for some understudy to her."

"We must think. Do they *all* call you Kirk?"

"I've never met one who didn't."

"What horrible creatures you artists are."

"My dear kid, you don't understand the thing at all. When you're painting a model she ceases to be a girl at all. You don't think of her as anything except a sort of lay-figure."

"Good gracious! Does your lay-figure call you Kirk, too?"

"It always looks as if it were going to."

Ruth shuddered.

"It's a repulsive thing. I hate it. It gives me the creeps. I came in here last night and switched on the light, and there it was, goggling at me."

"Are you getting nervous?"

Ruth's face grew grave.

"Do you know, Kirk, I really believe I am. This morning, as I was dressing, I suddenly got the most awful feeling that something terrible was going to happen. I don't know what. It was perfectly vague. I just felt a kind of horror. It passed off in a moment or two; but, while it lasted—ugh!"

"How ghastly! Why didn't you tell me before? You must be run down. Look here, let's shut up this place and get out to Florida or somewhere for the winter!"

"Let's don't do anything of the kind. Florida indeed! For the love of Mike, as Steve would say, it's much too expensive. You know, Kirk, we are both frightfully extravagant. I'm sure we are spending too much money as it is. You know you sold out some of your capital only the other day."

"It was only that once. And you had set your heart on that pendant. Surely to goodness, if I drag you away from a comfortable home to live in a hovel, the least I can do is to—"

"You didn't drag me. I just walked in and sat down, and you couldn't think how to get rid of me, so in despair you married me."

"That was it. And now I've got to set to work and make a fortune and--what do you call it?—support you in the style to which you have been accustomed. Which brings us back to the picture. I don't suppose I shall get ten dollars for it, but

"WAS THAT YOUR WIFE? SHE'S GOT A SWEET FACE"

I feel I shall curl up and die if I don't get it finished. Are you *absolutely* determined about the Vince girl?"

"I'm adamant. I'm granite. I'm chilled steel. Oh! Kirk, can't you find a nice, motherly old model, with white hair and spectacles? I shouldn't mind *her* calling you by your first name."

"But it's so absurd. I told you just now that an artist doesn't look on his models as human beings while—"

"I know. I've read all about that in books, and I believed it then. Why, when I married you, I said to myself: 'I mustn't be foolish. Kirk's an artist, I mustn't be a comic-supplement wife and object to his using models!' Oh, I was going to be so good and reasonable. You would have loved me! And then, when it came to the real thing, I found I just couldn't stand it. I know it's silly of me. I know just as well as you do that Miss Vince is quite a nice girl really, and is going to make a splendid Mrs. Traveling Salesman, but that doesn't help me. It's my wicked nature, I suppose. I'm just a plain cat, and that's all there is to it. Look at the way I treat your friends!"

Kirk started.

"You jumped!" said Ruth. "You jerked my head. Do you think I didn't know you had noticed it? I knew how unhappy you were when Mr. Jardine was here, and I just hated myself."

"Didn't you like Hank?" asked Kirk.

Ruth was silent for a moment.

"I wish you would," Kirk went on. "You don't know what a real white man old Hank is. You didn't see him properly that night. He was nervous. But he's one of the very best God ever made. We've known each other all our lives. He and I—"

"Don't tell me!" cried Ruth. "Don't you see that that's just the reason why I can't like him? Don't tell me about the things you and he did together, unless you want me to hate him. Don't you understand, dear? It's the same with all your friends. I'm jealous of them for having known you before I did. And I hate these models because they come into a part of your life into which I can't. I want you all to myself. I want to be your whole life. I know it's idiotic and impossible, but I do."

"You are my whole life," said Kirk seriously. "I wasn't born till I met you. There isn't a single moment when you are not my whole life."

She pressed her head contentedly against his arm.

"Kirk."

"Yes?"

"Let *me* pose for your picture."

"What! You couldn't!"

"Why not?"

"It's terribly hard work. It's an awful strain."

"I'm sure I'm as strong as that Vince girl. You ask Steve; he's seen me throw the medicine-ball."

"But posing is different. Hilda Vince has been trained for it."

"Well, let me try, at any rate."

"But—"

"Do! And I'll promise to like your Hank and not put on my grand manner when he begins telling me what fun you and he used to have in the good old days before I was born or thought of. May I?"

"But—"

"Quick! Promise!"

"Very well."

"You dear! I'll be the best model you ever had. I won't move a muscle, and I'll stand there till I drop."

"You'll do nothing of the kind. You'll come right down off that model-throne the instant you feel the least bit tired."

The picture which Kirk was painting was one of those pictures which thousands of young artists are working on unceasingly every day. Kirk's ideas about it were in a delightfully vague state. He had a notion that it might turn out in the end as "Carmen." On the other hand, if anything went wrong and he failed to insert a sufficient amount of wild deviltry into it, he could always hedge by calling it "A Reverie" or "The Spanish Maiden."

Possibly, if the thing became too pensive and soulful altogether, he might give it some title suggestive of the absent lover at the bull-fight—"The Toreador's Bride"—or something of that sort. The only point on which he was solid was that it was to strike the Spanish note; and to this end he gave Ruth a costume of black and orange and posed her on the model-throne with a rose in her hair.

Privately he had decided that ten minutes would be Ruth's limit. He knew something of the strain of sitting to an artist.

"Tired?" he asked at the end of this period.

Ruth shook her head and smiled.

"You must be. Come and sit down and take a rest."

"I'm quite all right, dear. Go on with your work."

"Well, shout out the moment you feel you've had enough."

He began to paint again. The minutes went by and Ruth made no movement. He began to grow absorbed in his work. He lost count of time. Ruth ceased to be Ruth, ceased even to be flesh and blood. She was just something he was painting.

"Kirk!"

The sharp suddenness of the cry brought him to his feet, quivering. Ruth was swaying on the model-throne. Her eyes were staring straight before her and her face was twisted with fear.

As he sprang forward she fell, pitching stiffly head foremost, as he had seen men fall in the ring, her arms hanging at her sides; and he caught her.

He carried her to the couch and laid her down. He hung for an instant in doubt whether to go for water or telephone for the doctor. He decided on the telephone.

He hung up the receiver and went back to Ruth. She stirred and gave a little moan. He flew up-stairs and returned with a pitcher of water. When he got back Ruth was sitting up. The look of terror was gone from her face. She smiled at him, a faint, curiously happy smile. He flung himself on his knees beside her, his arm round her waist, and burst into a babble of self-reproach.

He cursed himself for being such a brute, such a beast as to let her stand there, tiring herself to death. She must never do it again. He was a devil. He ought to have known she could not stand it. He was not fit to be married. He was not fit to live.

Ruth ruffled his hair.

"Stop abusing my husband," she said. "I'm fond of him. Did you catch me, Kirk?"

"Yes, thank God. I got to you just in time."

"That's the last thing I remember, wondering if you would. You seemed such miles and miles away. It was like looking at something in a mist through the wrong end of a telescope. Oh, Kirk!"

"Yes, honey?"

"It came again, that awful feeling as if something dreadful was going to happen. And then I felt myself going." She paused. "Kirk, I think I know now. I understand; and oh, I'm so happy!"

She buried her face on his shoulder, and they stayed there silent, till there came a ring at the bell. Kirk got up. George Pennicut ushered in the doctor. It was the same little old doctor who had ministered to George in his hour of need.

"Feeling better, Mrs. Winfield?" he said, as he caught sight of Ruth. "Your husband told me over the phone that you were unconscious."

"She fainted," cried Kirk. "It was all through me. I—"

The doctor took him by the shoulders. He had to stretch to do it.

"You go away, young man," he said. "Take a walk round the block. You aren't on in this scene."

Kirk was waiting in the hall when he left a few minutes later.

"Well?" he said anxiously.

"Well?" said the little doctor.

"Is she all right? There's nothing wrong, is there?"

The doctor grinned a friendly grin.

"On the contrary," he said. "You ought to be very pleased."

"What do you mean?"

"It's quite a commonplace occurrence, though I suppose it will seem like a miracle to you. But, believe me, it has happened before. If it hadn't, you and I wouldn't be here now."

Kirk looked at him in utter astonishment. His words seemed meaningless. And then, suddenly, he understood, and his heart seemed to stand still.

"You don't mean—" he said huskily.

"Yes, I do," said the doctor. "Good-by, my boy. I've got to hurry off. You caught me just as I was starting for the hospital."

Kirk went back to the studio, his mind in a whirl. Ruth was lying on the couch. She looked up as the door opened. He came quickly to her side.

"Ruth!" he muttered.

Her eyes were shining with a wonderful light of joy. She drew his head down and kissed him.

"Oh, Kirk," she whispered, "I'm happy. I'm happy. I've wanted this so."

He could not speak. He sat on the edge of the couch and looked at her. She had been wonderful to him before. She was a thousand times more wonderful now.

CHAPTER VIII

SUSPENSE

It seemed to Kirk, as the days went by, that a mist of unreality fell like a curtain between him and the things of this world. Commonplace objects lost their character and became things to marvel at. There was a new bond of sympathy between the world and himself.

A citizen walking in the park with his children became a kind of miracle. Here was a man who had traveled the road which he was traveling now, who had had the same hopes and fear and wonder. Once he encountered a prosperous-looking individual moving, like a liner among tugs, in the midst of no fewer than six offspring. Kirk fixed him with such a concentrated stare of emotion and excitement that the other was alarmed and went on his way alertly, as one in the presence of danger. It is probable that, if Kirk had happened to ask him the time at that moment, or indeed addressed him at all, he would have screamed for the police.

The mystery of childbirth and the wonder of it obsessed Kirk as time crept on. And still more was he conscious of the horrible dread that was gathering within him. Ruth's unvarying cheerfulness was to him almost uncanny. None of the doubts and fears which blackened his life appeared to touch her. Once he confided these to his friend, the little doctor, and was thoroughly bullied by him for his foolishness. But in spite of ridicule the fear crept back, cringingly, like a whipped dog.

And then, time moving on its leisurely but businesslike fashion, the day arrived, and for the first time in his life Kirk knew what fear really meant. All that he had experienced till now had, he saw, been a mild apprehension, not worthy of a stronger name. His flesh crawled with the thoughts which rose in his mind like black bubbles in a pond. There were moments when the temptation to stupefy himself with drink was almost irresistible.

It was his utter uselessness that paralyzed him. He seemed destined to be of no help to Ruth at just those crises when she needed him most. When she was facing her father with the news of the marriage he had not been at her side. And now, when she was fighting for her life, he could do nothing but pace the empty, quiet studio and think.

The doctor had arrived at eight o'clock, cheery as ever, and had come down-stairs after seeing Ruth to ask him to telephone to Mrs. Porter. In his overwrought state, this had jarred upon Kirk. Here, he felt, was somebody who could help where he was useless.

Mrs. Porter had appeared in a cab and had had the cold brutality to ask for a glass of sherry and a sandwich before going up-stairs. She put forward the lame excuse that she had not dined. Kirk gave her the sherry and sandwich and resumed his patrol in a glow of indignation. The idea of any one requiring food at this moment struck him as gross and revolting.

His wrath did not last. In a short while fear came back into its own.

The hands of the clock pointed to ten before he stooped to following Mrs. Porter's example. George Pennicut had been sent out, so he went into the little kitchen, where he found eggs, which he mixed with milk and swallowed. After this he was aware of a momentary excess of optimism. The future looked a little brighter. But not for long. Presently he was prowling the studio as restlessly as ever.

Men of Kirk's type are not given to deep thought. Until now he had probably never spent more than a couple of minutes consecutively in self-examination. This vigil forced him upon himself and caused him to pass his character under review, with strange and unsatisfactory results. He had never realized before what a curiously contemptible and useless person he was. It seemed to him that this was all he was fit for—to hang about doing nothing while everybody else was busy and proving his or her own worth.

A door opened and the little doctor came quietly down the stairs. Kirk sprang at him.

"Well?"

"My dear man, everything's going splendidly. Couldn't be better." The doctor's eyes searched his face. "When did you have anything to eat last?"

"I don't know. I had some eggs and milk. I don't know when."

The doctor took him by the shoulders and hustled him into the kitchen, where he searched and found meat and bread.

"Eat that," he said. "I'll have some, too."

"I couldn't."

"And some whisky. Where do you keep it?"

After the first few mouthfuls Kirk ate wolfishly. The doctor munched a sandwich with the placidity of a summer boarder at a picnic. His calmness amazed and almost shocked Kirk.

"You can't help her by killing yourself," said the doctor philosophically. "I like that woman with the gimlet eyes. At least I don't, but she's got sense. Go on. You haven't done yet. Another highball won't hurt you." He eyed Kirk with some sympathy. "It's a bad time for you, of course."

"For *me?* Good God!"

"You want to keep your nerve. Nothing awful is going to happen."

"If only there was something I could do."

"'They also serve who only stand and wait,'" quoted the doctor sententiously. "There is something you can do."

"What?"

"Light your pipe and take it easy."

Kirk snorted.

"I mean it. In a very short while now you will be required to take the stage and embrace your son or daughter, as the case may be. You don't want to appear looking as if you had been run over by an automobile after a night out. You want your appearance to give Mrs. Winfield as little of a shock as possible. Bear that in mind. Well, I must be going."

And Kirk was alone again.

The food and the drink and the doctor's words had a good effect. His mind became quieter. He sat down and filled his pipe. After a few puffs he replaced it in his pocket. It seemed too callous to think of smoking now. The doctor was a good fellow, but he did not understand. All the same, he was glad that he had had that whisky. It had certainly put heart into him for the moment.

What was happening up-stairs? He strained his ears, but could hear nothing.

Gradually, as he waited, his mood of morbid self-criticism returned. He had sunk once more into the depths when he was aware of a soft tapping. The doorbell rang very gently. He went to the door and opened it.

"I kinder thought I'd look in and see how things were getting along," said a voice.

It was Steve. A subdued and furtive Steve. Kirk's heart leaped at the sight of him. It was as if he had found something solid to cling to in a shifting world.

"Come in, Steve."

He spoke huskily. Steve sidled into the studio, embarrassment written on every line of him.

"Don't mind my butting in, do you? I've been walking up and down and around the block till every cop on the island's standing by waiting for me to pull something. Another minute and they'd have pinched me on suspicion. I just felt I had to come and see how Miss Ruth was making out."

"The doctor was down here just now. He said everything was going well."

"I guess he knows his business."

There was a silence. Kirk's ears were straining for sounds from above.

"It's hell," said Steve.

Kirk nodded. This kind of talk was more what he wanted. The doctor meant well, but he was too professional. Steve was human.

"Go and get yourself a drink, Steve. I expect you need one."

Steve shook his head.

"Wagon," he said briefly. And there was silence again.

"Say, Kirk."

"Yes?"

"What a wonder she is. Miss Ruth, I mean. I've helped her throw that medicine-ball — often — you wouldn't believe. She's a wonder." He paused. "Say, this *is* hell, ain't it?"

Kirk did not answer. It was very quiet in the studio now. In the street outside a heavy wagon rumbled past. Somebody shouted a few words of a popular song. Steve sprang to his feet.

"I'll fix that guy," he said. But the singing ceased, and he sat down again.

Kirk got up and began to walk quickly up and down. Steve watched him furtively.

"You want to take your mind off it," he said. "You'll be all in if you keep on worrying about it that way."

Kirk stopped in his stride.

"That's what the doctor said," he

snapped savagely. "What do you two fools think I'm made of?" He recovered himself quickly, ashamed of the outburst. "I'm sorry, Steve. Don't mind anything I say. It's awfully good of you to have come here, and I'm not going to forget it."

Steve scratched his chin reflectively.

"Say, I'll tell you something," he said. "My mother told me once that when I was born my old dad took it just like you. Found he was getting all worked up by having to hang around and do nothing, so he says to himself: 'I've got to take my mind off of this business, or it's me for the foolish-house.'

"Well, sir, there was a big guy down on that street who'd been picking on dad good and hard for a mighty long while. And this guy suddenly comes into dad's mind. He felt of his muscle, dad did. 'Gee!' he says to himself, 'I believe, the way I'm feeling, I could just go and eat up that gink right away.' And the more he thought of it, the better it looked to him, so all of a sudden he grabs his hat and beats it like a streak down to the saloon on the corner, where he knew the feller would be at that time, and he goes straight up to him and hands him one.

"Back comes the guy at him—he was a great big son of a gun, weighing thirty pounds more than dad—and him and dad mixes it right there in the saloon till the barkeep and about fifty other fellers throws them out, and then they goes off to a vacant lot to finish the thing. And dad's so worked up that he gives the other guy his till he hollers that that's all he'll want. And then dad goes home and waits quite quiet and happy and peaceful till they tell him I'm there."

Steve paused.

"Kirk," he said then, "how would you like a round or two with the small gloves, just to get things off of your mind for a spell and pass the time? My dad said he found it eased him mighty good."

Kirk stared at him.

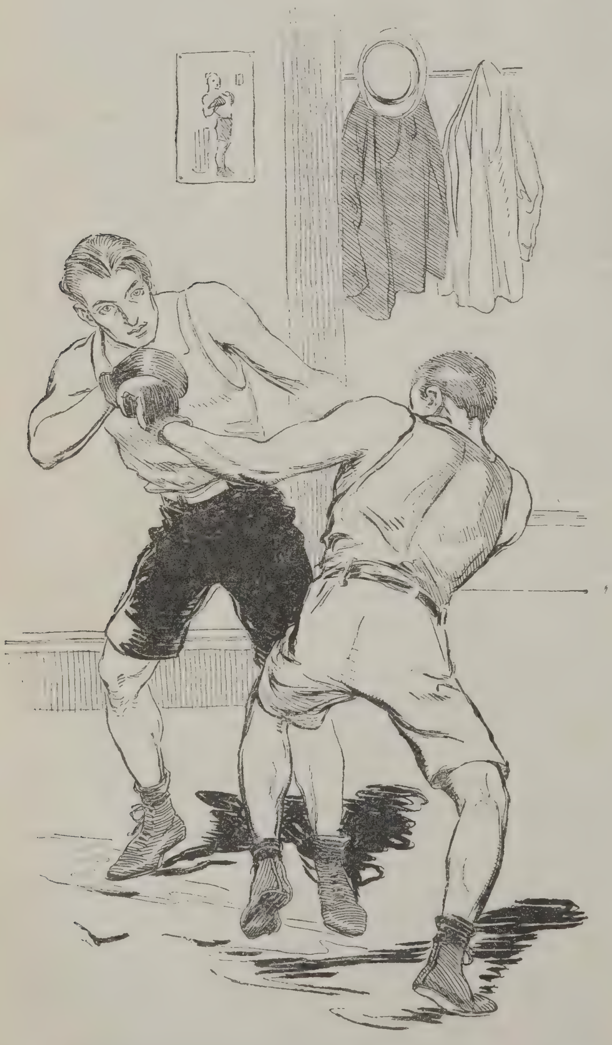
"Just a couple of rounds," urged Steve. "And you can go all out at that. I sha'n't mind. Just try to think I'm some guy that's been picking on you and let me have it. See what I mean?"

For the first time that day the faint ghost of a grin appeared on Kirk's face.

"I wonder if you're right, Steve?"

"I know I'm right. And, say, don't think I don't need it, too. I ain't known Miss Ruth all this time for nothing. You'll be doing me a kindness if you knock my face in."

The small gloves occupied a place of honor to themselves in



KIRK MADE ANOTHER RUSH. STEVE WENT TO MEET IT, HEAD DOWN AND HANDS BUSY a lower drawer. It was not often that Kirk used them in his friendly bouts with Steve. For ordinary occasions the larger and more padded species met with his approval. Steve, during these daily sparring encounters, was amiability itself; but he could not be counted upon not to forget himself for an occasional moment in the heat of the fray; and though Kirk was courageous enough, he preferred to preserve the regularity of his features at the expense of a little extra excitement.

Once, after a brisk rally, he had gone about the world looking as if he was suffering from mumps, owing to a right hook which no one regretted more than Steve himself.

But to-day was different; and Kirk felt that even a repetition of that lethal punch would be welcome.

Steve, when the contest opened, was disposed to be consolatory in word as well as deed. He kept up a desultory conversation as he circled and feinted.

" You gotta look at it this way," he began, side-stepping a left, " it ain't often you hear of anything going wrong at times like this. You gotta remember "—he hooked Kirk neatly on the jaw—" that," he concluded.

Kirk came back with a swing at the body which made his adversary grunt.

" That's true," he said.

" Sure," rejoined Steve a little breathlessly, falling into a clinch.

They moved warily round each other.

" So," said Steve, blocking a left, " that ought to comfort you some."

Kirk nodded. He guessed correctly that the other was alluding to his last speech, not to the counter which had just made the sight of his left eye a little uncertain.

Gradually, as the bout progressed, Kirk began to lose the slight diffidence which had hampered him at the start. He had been feeling so wonderfully friendly toward Steve, so grateful for his presence and his sympathy, that it had been hard, in spite of the other's admonitions, to enter into the fray with any real conviction. Moreover, subconsciously, he was listening all the time for sounds from above which never came.

These things gave a certain tameness to his operations. It was immediately after this blow in the eye, mentioned above, that he ceased to be an individual with private troubles and a wandering mind, and became a boxer pure and simple, his whole brain concentrated on the problem of how to get past his opponent's guard.

Steve, recognizing the change in an instant, congratulated himself on the success of his treatment. It had worked even more quickly than he had hoped. He helped the cure with another swift jab which shot over Kirk's guard.

Kirk came in with a rush. Steve slipped him. Kirk rushed again. Steve, receiving a hard punch on a nose which, though accustomed to such assaults, had never grown really to enjoy them, began to feel a slight diminution of his detached attitude toward this encounter. Till now his position had been purely that of the kindly physician soothing a patient. The rapidity with which the patient was permitting himself to be soothed rendered the post of physician something of a sinecure; and Steve, as Kirk had done, began to slip back into the boxer.

It was while he was in what might be called a transition stage that an unexpected swing sent him with some violence against the wall; and from that moment nature asserted itself. A curious, set look appeared on his face; wrinkles creased his forehead; his jaw protruded slightly.

Kirk made another rush. This time Steve did not slip; he went to meet it, head down and hands busy.

Mrs. Lora Delane Porter came downstairs with the measured impressiveness of one who bears weighty news. Her determined face was pale and tired, as it had every right to be; but she bore herself proudly, as one who has fought and not been defeated.

" Mr. Winfield," she said.

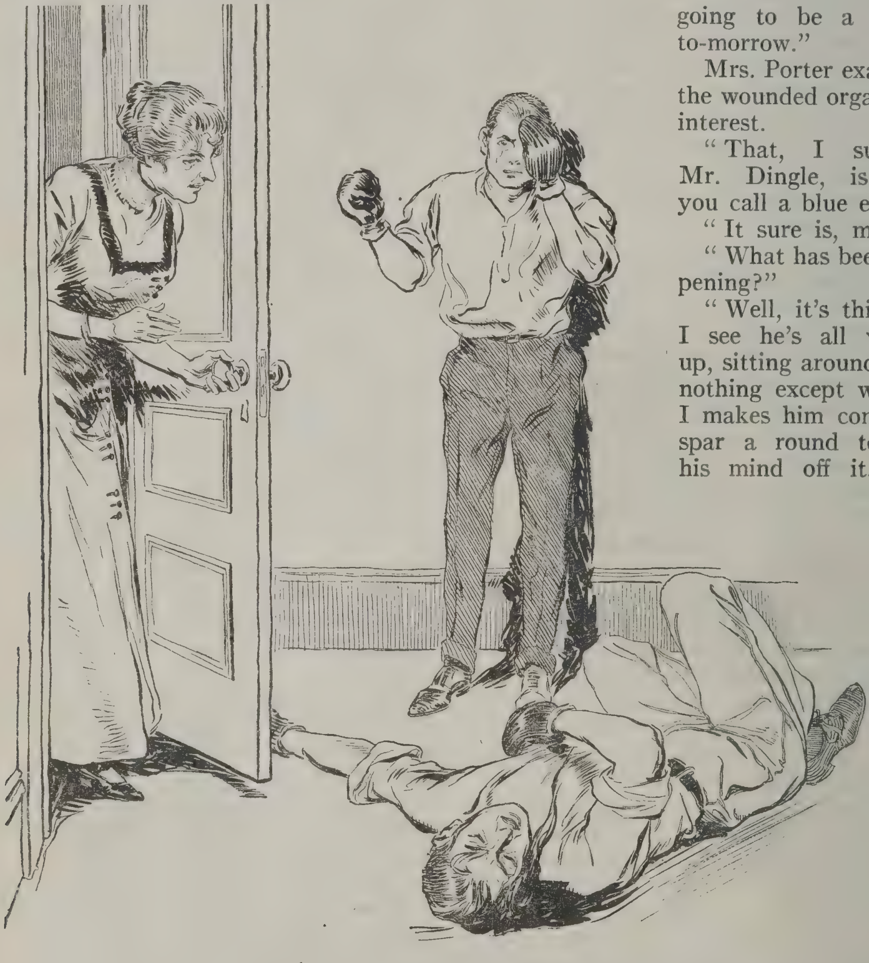
There was no answer. Looking about her, she found the studio empty.

Then, from behind the closed door of the inner room, she was aware of a strange, shuffling sound. She listened, astonished. She heard a gasp, then curious thuds, finally a bump louder than the thuds. And then there was silence.

These things surprised Mrs. Porter. She opened the door and looked in.

It says much for her iron self-control that she remained quiet at this point. A lesser person, after a far less tiring ordeal than she had passed through, would have found relief in some cry or exclamation—possibly even in a scream.

Against the far wall, breathing hard and fondling his left eye with a four-ounce glove, leaned Steve Dingle. His nose was bleeding somewhat freely, but this he appeared to consider a trifle unworthy of serious attention. On the floor, an even more disturbing spectacle, Kirk lay at full length. To Mrs. Porter's startled gaze he appeared to be dead. He, too, was bleeding, but he was not in a position to notice it.



TO MRS. PORTER'S STARTLED GAZE HE APPEARED TO BE DEAD

" It's all right, ma'am," said Steve, removing the hand from his face and revealing an eye which for spectacular dilapidation must have rivaled the epoch-making one which had so excited his mother on a famous occasion. " It's nothing serious."

" Has Mr. Winfield fainted?"

" Not exactly fainted, ma'am. It's like this. He'd got me clear up in a corner, and I seen it's up to me if I don't want to be knocked through the wall, so I has to cross him. Maybe I'd gotten a little worked up myself by then. But it was my fault. I told him to go all out, and he sure did. This eye's going to be a pippin to-morrow."

Mrs. Porter examined the wounded organ with interest.

" That, I suppose, Mr. Dingle, is what you call a blue eye?"

" It sure is, ma'am."

" What has been happening?"

" Well, it's this way. I see he's all worked up, sitting around doing nothing except wait, so I makes him come and spar a round to take his mind off it. My old dad, ma'am, when I was coming along, found that dope fixed him all right, so I reckoned it would do as much good here. My old dad went and beat the block off a fellow down our street, and it done him a lot of good."

Mrs. Porter shook his gloved hand.

" Mr. Dingle," she said with enthusiasm, " I really believe that you are the only sensible man I have ever met. Your common sense is astonishing. I have no doubt you saved Mr. Winfield from a nervous break-down. Would you be kind enough, when you are rested, to fetch some water and bring him to and inform him that he is the father of a son."

CHAPTER IX

THE WHITE HOPE IS TURNED DOWN

William Bannister Winfield was the most wonderful child. Of course, you had to have a certain amount of intelligence to see this. To the vapid and irreflective observer he was not much to look at in the early stages of his career, having a dough-like face almost entirely devoid of nose, a lack-luster eye, and the general appearance of a poached egg. His immediate circle of intimates, however, thought him a model of manly beauty; and there was the undeniable fact that he had come into the world weighing nine pounds. Take him for all in all, a lad of promise.

Kirk's sense of being in a dream continued. His identity seemed to have undergone a change. The person he had known as Kirk Winfield had disappeared, to be succeeded by a curious individual bubbling over with an absurd pride for which it was not easy to find an outlet. Hitherto a rather reserved man, he was conscious now of a desire to accost perfect strangers in the street and inform them that he was not the ordinary person they probably imagined, but a father with an intensely unusual son at home, and if they did not believe him they could come right along and see for themselves.

The only flaw in his happiness at the moment was the fact that his circle of friends was so small. He had not missed the old brigade of the studio before, but now the humblest of them would have been welcome, provided he would have sat still and listened. Even Percy Shanklyn would have been acceptable as an audience.

Steve, excellent fellow, was always glad to listen to him on his favorite subject. He had many long talks with Steve on the question of William's future. Steve, as the infant's godfather, which post he had claimed and secured at an early date, had definite views on the matter.

Here, held Steve, was the chance of a lifetime. With proper training, a baby of such obvious muscular promise might be made the greatest fighter that ever stepped into the ring. He was the real White Hope. He advised Kirk to direct William's education on lines which would insure his being, when the time was ripe, undisputed heavy-weight champion of the world. To Steve life outside the ring was a poor affair, practically barren of prizes for the ambitious.

Mrs. Lora Delane Porter, eying William's brow, of which there was plenty, he being at this time extremely short of hair, predicted a less robust and more intellectual future for him. Something more on the lines of president of some great university or ambassador at some important court struck her as his logical sphere.

Kirk's view was that he should combine both careers and be an ambassador who took a few weeks off every now and then in order to defend his champion's belt. In his spare time he might paint a picture or two.

Ruth hesitated between the army, the navy, the bar, and business. But every one was agreed that William was to be something special.

This remarkable child had a keen sense of humor. Thus he seldom began to cry in his best vein till the small hours of the morning; and on these occasions he would almost invariably begin again after he had been officially pronounced to be asleep. His sudden grab at the hair of any adult who happened to come within reach was very droll, too.

As to his other characteristics, he was of rather an imperious nature. He liked to be waited on. He wanted what he wanted when he wanted it. The greater part of his attention being occupied at this period with the important duty of chewing his thumb, he assigned the drudgery of life to his dependents. Their duties were to see that he got up in the morning, dressed, and took his tub; and after that to hang around on the chance of general orders.

Any idea Kirk may have had of resuming his work was abandoned during these months. No model, young and breezy or white-haired and motherly, passed the studio doors. Life was far too interesting for work. The canvas which might have become "Carmen" or "A Reverie" or even "The Toreador's Bride" lay unfinished and neglected in a corner.

It astonished Kirk to find how strong the paternal instinct was in him. In the days when he had allowed his mind to dwell upon the abstract wife he had sometimes gone a step further and conjured up the abstract baby. The result had always been to fill him with a firm conviction that the most persuasive of wild horses should not drag him from his bachelor seclusion. He had had definite ideas on babies as a class. And here he was with his world pivoting on one of them. It was curious.

The White Hope, as Steve called his godson—possibly with the idea of influencing him by suggestion—grew. The ailments which attacked lesser babies passed him by. He avoided croup, and even whooping-cough paid him but a flying visit hardly worth mentioning. His first tooth gave him a little trouble, but that is the sort of thing which may happen to any one; and the spirited way in which he protested against the indignity of cutting it was proof of a high soul.

Such was the remarkableness of this child that it annoyed Kirk more and more that he should be obliged to give the exhibition of his extraordinary qualities to so small an audience. Ruth felt the same; and it was for this reason that the first overtures were made to the silent camp which contained her father and her brother Bailey.

Since that evening in the library there had come no sign from the house on Fifth Avenue that its inmates were aware of her existence. Life had been too full till now to make this a cause of trouble to her; but with William Bannister becoming every day more amazing the desire came to her to try and heal the breach. Her father had so ordered his life in his relation to his children that Ruth's affection was not so deep as it might have been; but, after all, he was William Bannister's grandfather, and, as such, entitled to consideration.

It was these reflections that led to Steve's state visit to John Bannister—probably the greatest fiasco on record.

Steve had been selected for the feat on the strength of his having the right of entry to the Fifth Avenue house, for John Bannister was still obeying his doctor's orders and taking his daily spell of exercise with the pugilist—and Steve bungled it hopelessly.

His task was not a simple one. He was instructed to employ tact, to hint rather than to speak, to say nothing to convey the impression that Ruth in any way regretted the step she had taken, to give the idea that it was a matter of complete indifference to her whether she ever saw her father again or not, yet at the same time to make it quite clear that she was very anxious to see him as soon as possible.

William Bannister, grown to maturity and upholding the interests of his country as ambassador at some important court, might have jibbed at the mission.

William Bannister was to accompany Steve and be produced dramatically to support verbal arguments. It seemed to Ruth that for her father to resist William when he saw him was an impossibility. William's position was that of the ace of trumps in the cards which Steve was to play.

Steve made a few objections. His chief argument against taking up the post assigned to him was that he was a roughneck, and that the job in question was one which no roughneck, however gifted in the matter of left hooks, could hope to carry through with real success. But he yielded to pressure, and the expedition set out.

William Bannister at this time was at an age when he was beginning to talk a little and walk a little and take a great interest in things. His walking was a bit amateurish, and his speech rather hard to follow unless you had the key to it. But nobody could have denied that his walk, though staggery, was a genuine walk, and his speech, though limited, genuine speech, within the meaning of the act.

He made no objections to the expedition. On being told that he was going to see his grandpa he nodded curtly and said: "Gwa-wah," after his custom. For, as a conversationalist, perhaps the best description of him is to say that he tried hard. He rarely paused for a word. When in difficulties he said something; he did not seek refuge in silence. That the something was not always immediately intelligible was the fault of his audience for not listening more carefully.

Perhaps the real mistake of the expedition was the nature of its baggage. William Bannister had stood out for being allowed to take with him his wheelbarrow, his box of bricks, and his particular favorite, the dying pig, which you blew out and then allowed to collapse with a pleasing noise. These properties had struck his parents as excessive, but he was firm; and when he gave signs of being determined to fight it out on these lines if it took all the summer they gave in.

Steve had no difficulty in smuggling William into his grandfather's house. He was a great favorite below stairs there. His great ally was the English butler, Keggs.

Keggs was a stout, dignified, pigeon-toed old sinner, who cast off the butler when not on duty and displayed himself as something of a rounder. He was a man of many parts. It was his chief relaxation to look in at Broadway hotels while some big fight was in progress out West to watch the ticker and assure himself that the man he had backed with a portion of the loot which he had accumulated in the form of tips was doing justice to his judgment, for in private Keggs was essentially the sport.

WILLIAM BANNISTER WAS BEING MADE MUCH OF BY THE MAIDS

It was this that so endeared Steve to him. A few years ago Keggs had won considerable sums by backing Steve, and the latter was always given to understand that, as far as the lower regions of it were concerned, the house on Fifth Avenue was open to him at all hours.

To-day he greeted Steve with enthusiasm and suggested a cigar in the pantry before the latter should proceed to his work.

“ He ain't ready for you yet, Mr. Dingle. He's lookin' over some papers in — for goodness' sake, who's this?”

He had caught sight of William Bannister, who, having wriggled free of Steve, was being made much of by the maids.

“ The kid,” said Steve briefly.

“ Not—”

Steve nodded.

“ Sure. His grandson.”

Keggs's solemnity increased.

“ You aren't going to take him up-stairs with you?”

"Surest thing you know. That's why I brought him."

"Don't you do it, Mr. Dingle. 'E's in an awful temper this morning—he gets worse and worse—he'll fire you as soon as look at you."

"Can't be helped. I've got me instructions."

"You always were game," said Keggs admiringly. "I used to see that quick enough before you retired from active work. Well, good luck to you, Mr. Dingle."

Steve gathered up William Bannister, the wheelbarrow, the box of bricks, and the dying pig and made his way to the gymnasium.

The worst of these prearranged scenes is that they never happen just as one has figured them in one's mind. Steve had expected to have to wait a few minutes in the gymnasium, then there would be a step outside and the old man would enter. The beauty of this, to Steve's mind, was that he himself would be "discovered," as the stage term is; the onus of entering and opening the conversation would be on Mr. Bannister. And, as everybody who has ever had an awkward interview knows, this makes all the difference.

But the minutes passed, and still no grandfather. The nervousness which he had with difficulty expelled began to return to Steve. This was exactly like having to wait in the ring while one's opponent tried to get one's goat by dawdling in the dressing-room.

An attempt to relieve himself by punching the ball was a dismal failure. At the first bang of the leather against the wood William Bannister, who had been working in a preoccupied way at the dying pig, threw his head back and howled, and would not be comforted till Steve took out the rope and skipped before him, much as dancers used to dance before oriental monarchs in the old days.

Steve was just saying to himself for the fiftieth time that he was a fool to have come, when Keggs arrived with the news that Mr. Bannister was too busy to take his usual exercise this morning and that Steve was at liberty to go.

It speaks well for Steve's character that he did not go. He would have given much to retire, for the old man was one of the few people who inspired in him anything resembling fear. But he could not return tamely to the studio with his mission unaccomplished.

"Say, ask him if he can see me for a minute. Say it is important."

Keggs's eye rested on William Bannister, and he shook his head.

"I shouldn't, Mr. Dingle. Really I shouldn't. You don't know what an ugly mood he's in. Something's been worrying him. It's what you might call courting disaster."

"Gee! Do you think I *want* to do it? I've just got to. That's all there is to it."

A few moments later Keggs returned with the news that Mr. Bannister would see Dingle in the library.

"Come along, kid," said Steve. "Gimme hold of the excess baggage, and let's get a move on."

So in the end it was Mr. Bannister who was discovered and Steve who made the entrance. And, as Steve pointed out to Kirk later, it just made all the difference.

The effect of the change on Steve was to make him almost rollicking in his manner, as if he and Mr. Bannister were the nucleus of an Old Home Week celebration or two old college chums meeting after long absence. Nervousness, on the rare occasions when he suffered from it, generally had that effect on him.

He breezed into the library, carrying the wheelbarrow, the box of bricks, and the dying pig, and trailing William in his wake. William's grandfather was seated with his back to the door, dictating a letter to one of his secretaries.

He looked up as Steve entered. He took in Steve and William in a rapid glance and guessed the latter's identity in an instant. He had expected something of this sort ever since he had heard of his grandson's birth. Indeed, he had been somewhat surprised that the visit had not occurred before.

He betrayed no surprise.

"One moment, Dingle," he said, and turned to the secretary again. A faint sneer came and went on his face.

The delay completed Steve's discomfiture. He placed the wheelbarrow on the floor, the box of bricks on the wheelbarrow, and the dying pig on the box of bricks, whence it was instantly removed and inflated by William.

"'Referring to your letter of the eighth—'" said Mr. Bannister in his cold, level voice.

He was interrupted by the incisive cry of the dying pig.

"Ask your son to be quiet, Dingle," he said impassively.

Steve was staggered.

"ONE MOMENT, DINGLE," HE SAID, AND TURNED TO THE SECRETARY AGAIN

"Say, this ain't my son, squire," he began breezily.

"Your nephew, then, or whatever relation he happens to be to you."

He resumed his dictation. Steve wiped his forehead and looked helplessly at the White Hope, who, having discarded the dying pig, was now busy with the box of bricks.

Steve wished he had not come. He was accustomed to the primitive exhibition of emotions, having moved in circles where the wrathful expressed their wrath in a normal manner. Anger which found its expression in an exaggerated politeness was out of his line and made him uncomfortable.

After what seemed to him a century, John Bannister dismissed the secretary. Even then, however, he did not come immediately to Steve. He remained for a few moments writing, with his back turned. Then, just when Steve had given up hope of ever securing his attention, he turned suddenly.

"Well?"

"Say, it's this way, colonel," Steve had begun, when a triumphant cry from the direction of the open window stopped him. The White Hope was kneeling on a chair, looking down into the street.

" Bix," he explained over his shoulder.

" Kindly ring the bell, Dingle," said Mr. Bannister, unmoved. " Your little nephew appears to have dropped his bricks into Fifth Avenue."

In answer to the summons Keggs appeared. He looked anxious.

" Keggs," said Mr. Bannister, " tell one of the footmen to go out into the avenue and pick up some wooden bricks which he will find there. Dingle's little brother has let some fall."

As Keggs left the room Steve's pent-up nervousness exploded in a whirl of words.

" Aw say, boss, quit yer kiddin'. You know this kid ain't anything to do with me. Why, say, how would he be any relation of a roughneck like me? Come off the roof, bo. You know well enough who he is. He's your grandson. On the level."

Mr. Bannister looked at William, now engaged in running the wheelbarrow up and down the room, emitting the while a curious sound, possibly to encourage an imaginary horse. The inspection did not seem to excite him or afford him any pleasure.

" Oh!" he said.

Steve was damped, but resumed gamely:

" Say, boss, this is the greatest kid on earth. I'm not stringing you, honest. He's a wonder. On the level, did you ever see a kid that age with a pair of shoulders on him like what this kid's got? Say, squire, what's the matter with calling the fight off and starting fair? Miss Ruth would be tickled to death if you would. Can the rough stuff, colonel. I know you think you've been given a raw deal, Kirk chipping in like that and copping off Miss Ruth, but, for the love of Mike, what does it matter? You seen for yourself what a dandy kid this is. Well, then, check your grouch with your hat. Do the square thing. Have out the auto and come right round to the studio and make it up. What's wrong with that, colonel? Honest, they'd be tickled clean through."

At this point Keggs entered, followed by a footman carrying wooden bricks.

" Keggs," said Mr. Bannister, " telephone for the automobile at once—"

" That's the talk, colonel," cried Steve joyfully. " I knew you were a sport."

" —to take me down to Wall Street."

Keggs bowed.

" Oh, Keggs," said Mr. Bannister, as he turned to leave.

" Sir?"

" Another thing. See that Dingle does not enter the house again."

And Mr. Bannister resumed his writing, while Steve, gathering up the wheelbarrow, the box of bricks, and the dying pig, took William by the hand and retreated.

That terminated Ruth's attempts to conciliate her father.

There remained Bailey. From Bailey she was prepared to stand no nonsense. Meeting him on the street, she fairly kidnaped him, driving him into a taxicab and pushing him into the studio, where he was confronted by his nephew.

Bailey came poorly through the ordeal. William Bannister, a stern critic, weighed him up in one long stare, found him wanting, and announced his decision with all the strength of powerful lungs. In the end he had to be removed, hiccuping, and Bailey, after lingering a few uneasy moments making conversation to Kirk, departed, with such a look about the back of him as he sprang into his cab that Ruth felt that the visit was one which would not be repeated.

She went back into the studio with a rather heavy heart. She was fond of Bailey.

The sight of Kirk restored her. After all, what had happened was only what she had expected. She had chosen her path, and she did not regret it.

CHAPTER X

AN INTERLUDE OF PEACE

Two events of importance in the small world which centered round William B. Winfield occurred at about this time. The first was the entrance of Mamie, the second the exit of Mrs. Porter.

Mamie was the last of a series of nurses who came and went in somewhat rapid succession during the early years of the White Hope's life. She was introduced by Steve, who, it seemed, had known her since she was a child. She was the nineteen-year-old daughter of a compositor on one of the morning papers, a little, mouselike thing, with tiny hands and feet, a soft voice, and eyes that took up far more than their fair share of her face.

She had had no professional experience as a nursery-maid; but, as Steve pointed out, the fact that, in the absence of her mother, who had died some years previously, she had had sole charge of three small brothers at the age when small brothers are least easily handled, and had steered them through to the office-boy age without mishap, put her extremely high in the class of gifted amateurs. Mamie was accordingly given a trial, and survived it triumphantly. William Bannister, that discerning youth, took to her at once. Kirk liked the neat way she moved about the studio, his heart being still sore at the performance of one of her predecessors, who had upset and put a substantial foot through his masterpiece, that same "Ariadne in Naxos" which Lora Delane Porter had criticised on the occasion of her first visit to the studio. Ruth, for her part, was delighted with Mamie.

As for Steve, though as an outside member of the firm he cannot be considered to count, he had long ago made up his mind about her. Some time before, when he had found it impossible for him to be in her presence, still less to converse with her, without experiencing a warm, clammy, shooting sensation and a feeling of general weakness similar to that which follows a well-directed blow at the solar plexus, he had come to the conclusion that he must be in love. The furious jealousy which assailed him on seeing her embraced by and embracing a stout person old enough to be her father convinced him of this.

The discovery that the stout man actually was her father's brother relieved his mind to a certain extent, but the episode left him shaken. He made up his mind to propose at once and get it over. When Mamie joined the garrison of No. 90 a year later the dashing feat was still unperformed. There was that about Mamie which unmanned Steve. She was so small and dainty that the ruggedness which had once been his pride seemed to him, when he thought of her, an insuperable defect. The conviction that he was a roughneck deepened in him and tied his tongue.

The defection of Mrs. Porter was a gradual affair. From a very early period in the new régime she had been dissatisfied. Accustomed to rule, she found herself in an unexpectedly minor position. She had definite views on the hygienic upbringing of children, and these she imparted to Ruth, who listened pleasantly, smiled, and ignored them.

Mrs. Porter was not used to such treatment. She found Ruth considerably less malleable than she had been before marriage, and she resented the change.

Kirk, coming in one afternoon, found Ruth laughing.

"It's only Aunt Lora," she said. "She will come in and lecture me on how to raise babies. She's crazy about microbes. It's the new idea. Sterilization, and all that. She thinks that everything a child touches ought to be sterilized first to kill the germs. Bill's running awful risks being allowed to play about the studio like this."

Kirk looked at his son and heir, who was submitting at that moment to be bathed. He was standing up. It was a peculiarity of his that he refused to sit down in a bath, being apparently under the impression, when asked to do so, that there was a conspiracy afoot to drown him.

"I don't see how the kid could be much fitter."

"It's not so much what he is now. She is worrying about what might happen to him. She can talk about bacilli till your flesh creeps. Honestly, if Bill ever did get really ill, I believe Aunt Lora could talk me round to her views about them in a minute. It's only the fact that he is so splendidly well that makes it seem so absurd."

Kirk laughed.

"It's all very well to laugh. You haven't heard her. I've caught myself wavering a dozen times. Do you know, she says a child ought not to be kissed?"

"It has struck me," said Kirk meditatively, "that your Aunt Lora, if I may make the suggestion, is the least bit of what Steve would call a shy-dome. Is there anything else she has mentioned?"

"Hundreds of things. Bill ought to be kept in a properly sterilized nursery, with sterilized toys and sterilized everything, and the temperature ought to be just so high and no higher, and just so low and no lower. Get her to talk about it to you. She makes you wonder why everybody is not dead."

"This is a new development, surely? Has she ever broken out in this place before?"

"Oh, yes. In the old days she often used to talk about it. She has written books about it."

"I thought her books were all about the

selfishness of the modern young man in not marrying."

"Not all. Some of them are about how to look after the baby. It's no good the modern young man marrying if he's going to murder his baby directly afterward, is it?"

"Something in that. There's just one objection to this sterilized nursery business, though, which she doesn't seem to have detected. How am I going to provide these things on an income of five thousand and at the same time live in that luxury which the artist soul demands? Bill, my lad, you'll have to sacrifice yourself for your father's good. When I'm a millionaire we'll see about it. Meanwhile—"

"Meanwhile," said Ruth, "come and be dried before you catch your death of cold." She gathered William Bannister into her lap.

"I pity any germ that tries to play catch-as-catch-can with that infant," remarked Kirk. "He'd simply flatten it out in a round. Did you ever see such a chest on a kid of that age?"

It was after the installation of Whiskers at the studio that the diminution of Mrs. Porter's visits became really marked. There was something almost approaching a battle over Whiskers, who was an Irish terrier puppy which Hank Jardine had presented to William Bannister as a belated birthday present.

Mrs. Porter utterly excommunicated Whiskers. Nothing, she maintained, was so notoriously supercharged with bacilli as a long-haired dog. If this was true, William Bannister certainly gave them every chance to get to work upon himself. It was his constant pleasure to clutch Whiskers to him in a viselike clinch, to bury his face in his shaggy back, and generally to court destruction. Yet the more he clutched the healthier did he appear to grow, and Mrs. Porter's demand for the dog's banishment was overruled.

Mrs. Porter retired in dudgeon. She liked to rule, and at No. 90 she felt that she had become merely among those present. She was in the position of a mother country whose colony has revolted. For years she had been accustomed to look on Ruth as a disciple, a weaker spirit whom she could mold to her will, and now Ruth was refusing to be molded.

So Mrs. Porter's visits ceased. Ruth still saw her at her apartment when she cared to go there, but she kept away from the studio. She considered that in the matter of William Bannister her claim had been jumped, that she had been deposed; and she withdrew.

"I shall bear up," said Kirk, when this fact was brought home to him. "I mistrust your Aunt Lora as I should mistrust some great natural force which may become active at any moment and give you yours. An earthquake, for instance. I have no quarrel with your Aunt Lora in her quiescent state, but I fear the developments of that giant mind. We are better off without her."

"All the same," said Ruth loyally, "she's rather a dear. And we ought to remember that, if it hadn't been for her, you and I would never have met."

"I do remember it. And I'm grateful. But I can't help feeling that a woman capable of taking other people's lives and juggling with them as if they were india-rubber balls, as she did with ours, is likely at any moment to break out in a new place. My gratitude to her is the sort of gratitude you would feel toward a cyclone if you were walking home late for dinner and it caught you up and deposited you on your door-step. Your Aunt Lora is a human cyclone. No, on the whole, she's more like an earthquake. She has a habit of splitting up and altering the face of the world whenever she feels like it, and I'm too well satisfied with my world at present to relish the idea of having it changed."

Little by little the garrison of the studio had been whittled down. Except for Steve, the community had no regular members outside the family itself. Hank was generally out of town. Bailey paid one more visit, then seemed to consider that he could now absent himself altogether. And the members of Kirk's bachelor circle stayed away to a man.

Their isolation was rendered more complete by the fact that Ruth, when she had ornamented New York society, had made few real friends. Most of the girls she had known bored her. They were gushing creatures with a passion for sharing and imparting secrets, and Ruth's cool reserve had alienated her from them.

When she married she dropped out. The romance of her wedding gave people something to talk about for a few days, and then she was forgotten.

And so it came about that she had her desire and was able practically to monopolize Kirk. He and she and William Bannister lived in a kind of hermit's cell for three and enjoyed this highly unnatural state of things enormously. Life had never seemed so full either to Kirk or herself. There was always something to do, something to think about, something to look forward to, if it was only a visit to a theater or the inspection of William Bannister's bath.

CHAPTER XI

STUNG TO ACTION

It was in the third year of the White Hope's life that the placid evenness of Kirk's existence began to be troubled. The orderly procession of the days was broken by happenings of unusual importance, one at least of them extraordinarily unpleasant. This was the failure of a certain stock in which nearly half of Kirk's patrimony was invested, that capital which had always seemed to him as solid a part of life as the asphalt on which he walked, as unchangeable a part of nature as the air he breathed. He had always had it, and he could hardly bring himself to realize that he was not always to have it.

It gave him an extraordinary feeling of panic and discomfort when at length he faced the fact squarely that his private means, on the possession of which he had based the whole lazy scheme of his life, were as much at the mercy of fate as the stake which a gambler flings on the green cloth. He did not know enough of business to understand the complicated processes by which a stock hitherto supposed to be as impregnable as municipal bonds had been hammered into a ragged remnant in the course of a single day; but the result of them was unpleasantly clear and easily grasped.

His income was cut in half, and instead of being a comfortably off young man, idly watching the pageant of life from a seat in the grand stand, he must now plunge into the crowd and endeavor to earn a living as others did.

For his losses did not begin and end with the ruin of this particular stock. At intervals during the past two years he had been nibbling at his capital, and now, forced to examine his affairs frankly and minutely, he was astonished at the inroads he had made upon it.

There had been the up-keep of the summer shack he had bought in Connecticut. There had been expenses in connection with William Bannister. There had been little treats for Ruth. There had been cigars and clothes and dinners and taxicabs and all the other trifles which cost nothing but mount up and make a man wander beyond the bounds of his legitimate income.

It was borne in upon Kirk, as he ruefully reflected upon these things, that the only evidence he had shown of the possession of the artistic temperament had been the joyous carelessness of his extravagance. In that only had he been the artist. It shocked him to think how little honest work he had done during the past two years. He had lived in a golden haze into which work had not entered.

He was to be shocked still more very soon.

Stung to action by his thoughts, he embarked upon a sweeping attack on the stronghold of those who exchange cash for artists' dreams. He ransacked the studio and set out on his mission in a cab bulging with large, small, and medium-sized canvases. Like a wave receding from a breakwater he returned late in the day, a branded failure.

The dealers had eyed his canvases, large, small, and medium-sized, and, in direct contravention of their professed object in life, had refused to deal. Only one of them, a man with grimy hands but a moderately golden heart, after passing a sepia thumb over some of the more ambitious works, had offered him fifteen dollars for a little sketch which he had made in an energetic moment of William Bannister crawling on the floor. This, the dealer asserted, was the sort of "darned mushy stuff" the public fell for, and he held it to be worth the fifteen, but not a cent more. Kirk, humble by now, accepted three battered-looking bills and departed.

He had a long talk with Ruth that night, and rose from it in the frame of mind which in some men is induced by prayer. Ruth was quite marvelously sensible and sympathetic.

"I wanted you," she said in answer to his self-reproaches, "and here we are, together. It's simply nonsense to talk about ruining my life and dragging me down.

What *does* it matter about this money? We have got plenty left."

"We've got about as much left as you used to spend on hats in the old days."

"Well, we can easily make it do. I've thought for some time that we were growing too extravagant. And talking of hats, I had no right to have that last one you bought me. It was wickedly expensive. We can economize there, at any rate. We can get along splendidly on what you have now. Besides, directly you settle down and start to paint, we shall be quite rich again."

Kirk laughed grimly.

"I wish you were a dealer," he said. "Fifteen dollars is what I have managed to extract from them so far. One of the Great Unwashed on Sixth Avenue gave me that for that sketch I did of Bill on the floor."

"Which took you about three minutes to do," Ruth pointed out triumphantly. "You see! You're bound to make a fortune if you stick to it."

Kirk put his arm round her and gave her a silent hug of gratitude. He had dreaded this talk, and lo! it was putting new life into him.

They sat for a few moments in silence.

"I don't deserve it," said Kirk at last. "Instead of comforting me like this, and making me think I'm rather a fine sort of a fellow, you ought to be lashing me with scorpions. I don't suppose any man has ever made such a criminal idiot of himself in this city before."

"You couldn't tell that this stock was going to fail."

"No; but I could have done some work these last three years and made it not matter whether it failed or not. You can't comfort me out of that knowledge. I knew all along that I was being a waster and a loafer, but I was so happy that I didn't mind. I was so interested in seeing what you and the kid would do next that I didn't seem to have time to work. And the result is that I've gone right back.

"There was a time when I really could paint a bit. Not much, it's true, but enough to get along with. Well, I'm going to start in again in earnest now, and if I don't make good, well, there's always Hank's offer."

Ruth turned a little pale. They had discussed Hank's offer before, but then life had been bright and cloudless and Hank's offer a thing to smile at. Now it had assumed an uncomfortably practical aspect.

"You will make good," said Ruth.

"I'll do my best," said Kirk. But even as he spoke his mind was pondering on the proposition which Hank had made.

Hank, always flitting from New York into the unknown and back again, had called at the studio one evening, after a long absence, looking sick and tired. He was one of those lean, wiry men whom it is unusual to see in this condition, and Kirk was sympathetic and inquisitive.

Hank needed no pressing. He was full of his story.

"I've been in Colombia," he said. "I got back on a fruit-steamer this morning. Do you know anything of Colombia?"

Kirk reflected.

"Only that there's generally a revolution there," he said.

"There wasn't anything of that kind this trip, except in my interior." Hank pulled thoughtfully at his pipe. The odor of his remarkable brand of tobacco filled the studio. "I've had a Hades of a time," he said simply.

Kirk looked at him curiously. Hank was in a singularly chastened mood tonight.

"What took you there?"

"Gold."

"Gold? Mining?"

Hank nodded.

"I didn't know there were gold-mines in that part of the world," said Kirk.

"There are. The gold that filled the holds of Spanish galleons in the sixteenth century came from Colombia. The place is simply stiff with old Spanish relics."

"But surely the mines must have been worked out ages ago."

"Only on the surface."

Kirk laughed.

"How do you mean, only on the surface? Explain. I don't know a thing about gold, except that getting it out of picture-dealers is like getting blood out of a turnip."

"It's simple enough. The earth hoards its gold in two ways. There's auriferous rock and auriferous dirt. If the stuff is in the rock, you crush it. If it's in the dirt, you wash it."

"It sounds simple."

"It is. The difficult part is finding it."

"And you have done that?"

"I have. Or I'm practically certain I have. At any rate, I know that I have discovered the ditches made by the Spaniards three hundred years ago. If there was gold there in those days there is apt to be gold there now. Only it isn't on the surface any longer. They cleaned up as far as the surface is concerned, so I have to sink shafts and dig tunnels."

"I see. It isn't so simple as it used to be."

"It is, practically, if you have any knowledge of mining."

"Well, what's your trouble?" asked Kirk. "Why did you come back? Why aren't you out there grabbing it with both hands and getting yourself into shape to be a walking gold-mine to your friends? I don't like to see this idle spirit in you, Hank."

Hank smoked long and thoughtfully.

"Kirk," he said suddenly.

"Well?"

Hank shook his head.

"No, it's no good."

"What is no good? What do you mean?"

"I came back," said Hank, suddenly lucid, "with a wild notion of getting you to come in with me on this thing."

"What! Go to Colombia with you?"

Hank nodded.

"But, of course, it's not possible. It's no job for a married man."

"Why not? If this gold of yours is just lying about in heaps it seems to me that a married man is exactly the man who ought to be around grabbing it. Or do you believe that old yarn about two being able to live as cheaply as one? Take it from me, it's not so. If there is gold waiting to be gathered up in handfuls, me for it. When do we start? Can I bring Ruth and the kid?"

"I wish we could start. If I could have had you with me these last months I'd never have quit. But I guess it's out of the question. You've no idea what sort of an inferno it is, and I won't let you come into it with your eyes shut. But if ever you are in a real tight corner let me know. It might be worth your while then to take a few risks."

"Oh! there are risks?"

"Risks! My claims are located along the Atrato River in the Choco district. Does that convey anything to you?"

"Not a thing."

"The workings are three hundred miles inland. Just three hundred miles of pure Hades. You can get all the fevers you ever heard of, and a few more. I got most of them this last trip."

"I thought you were looking pretty bad."

"I ought to be. I've swallowed so much quinin since I saw you last that my ears are buzzing still. And then there are the insects. They all bite. Some bite worse than others, but not much. Darn it! even the butterflies bite out there. Every animal in the country has some other animal constantly chasing it until a white man comes along, when they call a truce and both chase him. And the vegetation is so thick and grows so quickly that you have to cut down the jungle about the workings every few days or so to avoid being swamped by it. Otherwise," finished Hank, refilling his pipe and lighting it, "the place is a pretty good kind of summer resort."

"And you're going back to it? Back to the quinin and the beasts and the butterflies?"

"Sure. The gold runs up to twenty dollars the cubic yard and is worth eighteen dollars an ounce."

"When are you going?"

"I'm in no hurry. This year, next year, some time, never. No, not never. Call it some time."

"And you want me to come, too?"

"I would give half of whatever there is in the mine to have you come. But things being as they are, well, I guess we can call it off. Is there any chance in the world, Kirk, of your ever ceasing to be a bloated capitalist? Could any of your stocks go back on you?"

"I doubt it. They're pretty gilt-edged, I fancy, though I've never studied the question of stocks. My little gold-mine isn't in the same class with yours, but it's as solid as a rock, and no fevers and insects attached to it, either."

And now the gold-mine had proved of less than rocklike solidity. The most gilt-edged of all the stocks had failed. The capitalist had become in one brief day the struggling artist.

Hank's proposal seemed a good deal less fantastic now to Kirk as he prepared for his second onslaught, the grand attack, on the stronghold of those who bought art with gold.

CHAPTER XII

A CLIMAX

ONE afternoon, about two weeks later, Kirk, returning to the studio from an unprofitable raid into the region of the dealers, found on the table a card bearing the name of Mrs. Robert Wilbur. This had been crossed out, and beneath it, in a straggly hand, the name Miss Wilbur had been written.

The phenomenon of a caller at the cell of the two hermits was so strange that he awaited Ruth's arrival with more than his customary impatience. She would be able to identify the visitor. George Pennicut, questioned on the point, had no information of any value to impart. A very pretty young lady she was, said George, with what you might call a lively manner. She had seemed disappointed at finding nobody at home. No, she had left no message.

Ruth, arriving a few moments later, was met by Kirk with the card in his hand.

"Can you throw any light on this?" he said. "Who is Miss Wilbur, who has what you might call a lively manner and appears disappointed when she does not find us at home?"

Ruth looked at the card.

"Sybil Wilbur? I wonder what she wants."

"Who is she? Let's get that settled first."

"Oh, she's a girl I used to know. I haven't seen her for two years. I thought she had forgotten my existence."

"Call her up on the phone. If we don't solve this mystery we sha'n't sleep to-night. It's like *Robinson Crusoe* and the footprint."

Ruth went to the telephone. After a short conversation she turned to Kirk with sparkling eyes and the air of one with news to impart.

"Kirk! She wants you to paint her portrait!"

"What!"

"She's engaged to Bailey! Just got engaged! And the first thing she does is to insist on his letting her come to you for her portrait." Ruth bubbled with laughter. "It's to be a birthday present for Bailey, and Bailey has got to pay for it. That's so exactly like Sybil."

"I hope the portrait will be. She's taking chances."

"I think it's simply sweet of her. She's a real friend."

"At fairly long intervals, apparently. Did you say you had not seen her for two years?"

"She is an erratic little thing with an awfully good heart. I feel quite touched at her remembering us. Oh, Kirk, you must do a simply wonderful portrait, something that everybody will talk about, and then our fortune will be made! You will become the only painter that people will go to for their portraits."

Kirk did not answer. His experiences of late had developed in him an unwonted mistrust of his powers. To this was added the knowledge that, except for an impressionist study of Ruth for private exhibition only, he had never attempted a portrait. To be called upon suddenly like this to show his powers gave him much the same feeling which he had experienced when called upon as a child to recite poetry before an audience. It was a species of stage fright.

But it was certainly a chance. Portrait-painting was an uncommonly lucrative line of business. His imagination, stirred by Ruth's, saw visions of wealthy applicants turned away from the studio door owing to pressure of work on the part of the famous man for whose services they were bidding vast sums.

"By Jove!" he said thoughtfully.

Another aspect of the matter occurred to him.

"I wonder what Bailey thinks about it!"

"Oh, he's probably so much in love with her that he doesn't mind what she does. Besides, Bailey likes you."

"Does he?"

"Oh, well, if he doesn't, he will. This will bring you together."

"I suppose he knows about it?"

"Oh, yes. Sybil said he did. It's all settled. She will be here to-morrow for the first sitting."

Kirk spoke the fear that was in his mind.

"Ruth, old girl, I'm horribly nervous about this. I am taken with a sort of second sight. I see myself making a ghastly failure of this job and Bailey knocking me down and refusing to come across with the check."

"Sybil is bringing the check with her to-morrow," said Ruth simply.

"Is she?" said Kirk. "Now I wonder if that makes it worse or better. I'm trying to think!"

Sybil Wilbur fluttered in next day at noon, a tiny, restless creature who darted about the studio like a humming-bird. She effervesced with the joy of life. She uttered little squeaks of delight at everything she saw. She hugged Ruth, beamed at Kirk, went wild over William Bannister, thought the studio too cute for words, insisted on being shown all over it, and talked incessantly.

It was about two o'clock before she actually began to sit, and even then she was no statue. A thought would come into her small head and she would whirl round to impart it to Ruth, destroying in a second the pose which it had taken Kirk ten painful minutes to fix.

Kirk was too amused to be irritated. She was such a friendly little soul and so obviously devoted to Ruth that he felt she was entitled to be a nuisance as a sitter. He wondered more and more what weird principle of selection had been at work to bring Bailey and this butterfly together. He had never given any deep thought to the study of his brother-in-law's character; but, from his small knowledge of him, he would have imagined some one a trifle more substantial and serious as the ideal wife for him. Life, he conceived, was to Bailey a stately march. Sybil Wilbur evidently looked on it as a mad gallop.

Ruth felt the same. She was fond of Sybil, but she could not see her as the foreordained Mrs. Bailey.

"I suppose she swept him off his feet," she said. "It just shows that you never really get to know a person even if you're their sister. Bailey must have all sorts of hidden sides to his character which I never noticed—unless *she* has. But I don't think there is much of that about Sybil. She's just a child. But she's very amusing, isn't she? She enjoys life so furiously."

"I think Bailey will find her rather a handful. Does she ever sit still, by the way? If she is going to act right along as she did to-day this portrait will look like that cubist picture of the 'Dance at the Spring.'"

As the sittings went on Miss Wilbur consented gradually to simmer down and the portrait progressed with a fair amount of speed. But Kirk was conscious every day of a growing sensation of panic. He was trying his very hardest, but it was bad work, and he knew it.

His hand had never had very much cunning, but what it had had it had lost in the years of his idleness. Every day showed him more clearly that the portrait of Miss Wilbur, on which so much depended, was an amateurish daub. He worked doggedly on, but his heart was cold with that chill that grips the artist when he looks on his work and sees it to be bad.

At last it was finished. Ruth thought it splendid. Sybil Wilbur pronounced it cute, as she did most things. Kirk could hardly bear to look at it. In its finished state it was worse than he could have believed possible.

In the old days he had been a fair painter with one or two bad faults. Now the faults seemed to have grown like weeds, choking whatever of merit he might once have possessed. This was a horrible production, and he was profoundly thankful when it was packed up and removed from the studio. But behind his thankfulness lurked the feeling that all was not yet over, that there was worse to come.

It came.

It was heralded by a tearful telephone call from Miss Wilbur, who rang up Ruth with the agitated information that "Bailey didn't seem to like it." And on the heels of the message came Bailey in person, pink from forehead to collar, and almost as wrathful as he had been on the great occasion of his first visit to the studio. His annoyance robbed his speech of its normal stateliness. He struck a colloquial note unusual with him.

"I guess you know what I've come about," he said.

He had found Kirk alone in the studio, as ill luck would have it. In the absence of Ruth he ventured to speak more freely than he would have done in her presence.

"It's an infernal outrage," he went on. "I've been stung, and you know it."

Kirk said nothing. His silence infuriated Bailey.

"It's the portrait I'm speaking about—the portrait, if you have the nerve to call it that, of Miss Wilbur. I was against her sitting to you from the first, but she insisted. Now she's sorry."

"It's as bad as all that, is it?" said Kirk

SHE HUGGED RUTH AND THOUGHT THE STUDIO TOO CUTE FOR WORDS dully. He felt curiously indisposed to fight. A listlessness had gripped him. He was even a little sorry for Bailey. He saw his point of view and sympathized with it.

"Yes," said Bailey fiercely. "It is, and you know it."

Kirk nodded. Bailey was quite right. He did know it.

"It's a joke," went on Bailey shrilly. "I can't hang it up. People would laugh at it. And to think that I paid you all that money for it. I could have got a real artist for half the price."

"That is easily remedied," said Kirk. "I will send you a check to-morrow."

Bailey was not to be appeased. The venom of more than three years cried out for utterance. He had always held definite views upon Kirk, and Heaven had sent him the opportunity of expressing them.

"Yes, I dare say," he said contemptuously. "That would settle the whole thing, wouldn't it? What do you think you are—a millionaire? Talking as if that amount of money made no difference to you! Where does my sister come in? How about Ruth? You sneak her away from her home and then—"

Kirk's lethargy left him. He flushed.

"I think that will be about all, Bannister," he said. He spoke quietly, but his voice trembled.

But Bailey's long-dammed hatred, having at last found an outlet, was not to be checked in a moment.

"Will it? Will it? The hell it will. Let me tell you that I came here to talk straight to you, and I'm going to do it. It's about time you had your darned dime-novel romance shown up to you the way it strikes somebody else. You think you're a tremendous dashing twentieth-century *Young Lochinvar,* don't you? You thought you had done a pretty smooth bit of work when you sneaked Ruth away! You! You haven't enough backbone in you even to make a bluff at working to support her. You're just what my father said you were—a loafer who pretends to be an artist. You've got away with it up to now, but you've shown yourself up at last. You damned waster!"

Kirk walked to the door and flung it open.

"You're perfectly right, Bannister," he said quietly. "Everything you have said is quite true. And now would you mind going?"

"I've not finished yet."

"Yes, you have."

Bailey hesitated. The first fine frenzy had left him, and he was beginning to be a little ashamed of himself for having expressed his views in a manner which, though satisfying, was, he felt, less dignified than he could have wished.

He looked at Kirk, who was standing stiffly by the door. Something in his attitude decided Bailey to leave well alone. Such had been his indignation that it was only now that for the first time it struck him that his statement of opinion had not been made without considerable bodily danger to himself. Jarred nerves had stood him in the stead of courage; but now his nerves were soothed and he saw things clearly.

He choked down what he had intended to say and walked out. Kirk closed the door softly behind him and began to pace the studio floor as he had done on that night when Ruth had fought for her life in the room up-stairs.

His mind worked slowly at first. Then, as it cleared, he began to think more and more rapidly, till the thoughts leaped and ran like tongues of fire, scorching him.

It was all true. That was what hurt. Every word that Bailey had flung at him had been strictly just.

He had thought himself a fine, romantic fellow. He was a waster and a loafer who pretended to be an artist. He had thrown away the little talent he had once possessed. He had behaved shamefully to Ruth, shirking his responsibilities and idling through life. He realized it now, when it was too late.

Suddenly through the chaos of his reflections there shone out clearly one coherent thought, the recollection of what Hank Jardine had offered to him. "If ever you are in a real tight corner—"

His brain cleared. He sat down calmly to wait for Ruth. His mind was made up. Hank's offer was the way out, the only way out, and he must take it.

BOOK TWO

CHAPTER I

EMPTY-HANDED

THE steamship Santa Barbara, of the United Fruit Line, moved slowly through the glittering water of the bay on her way to dock. Out at quarantine earlier in the morning there had been a mist, through which passing ships loomed up vague and shapeless; but now the sun had dispersed it and a perfect May morning welcomed the Santa Barbara home.

Kirk leaned on the rail, looking with dull eyes on the city he had left a year before. Only a year! It seemed ten. As he stood there he felt an old man.

A drummer, a cheery soul who had come aboard at Porto Rico, sauntered up, beaming with well-being and good-fellowship.

"Looks pretty good, sir," said he.

Kirk did not answer. He had not heard.

"Some burg," ventured the drummer.

Again encountering silence, he turned away, hurt. This churlish attitude on the part of one returning to God's country on one of God's own mornings surprised and wounded him.

To him all was right with the world. He had breakfasted well; he was smoking a good cigar; and he was strong in the knowledge that he had done well by the firm this trip and that bouquets were due to be handed to him in the office on lower Broadway. He was annoyed with Kirk for having cast even a tiny cloud upon his contentment.

He communicated his feelings to the third officer, who happened to come on deck at that moment.

"Say, who *is* that guy?" he asked complainingly. "The big son of a gun leaning on the rail. Seems like he'd got a hangover this morning. Is he deaf and dumb or just plain grouchy?"

The third officer eyed Kirk's back with sympathy.

"I shouldn't worry him, Freddie," he said. "I guess if you had been up against it like him you'd be shy on the small talk. That's a fellow called Winfield. They carried him on board at Colon. He was about all in. Got fever in Colombia, inland at the mines, and nearly died. His pal did die. Ever met Hank Jardine?"

"Long, thin man?"

The other nodded.

"One of the best. He made two trips with us."

"And he's dead?"

"Died of fever away back in the interior, where there's nothing much else except mosquitoes. He and Winfield went in there after gold."

"Did they get any?" asked the drummer, interested.

The third officer spat disgustedly over the rail.

"You ask Winfield. Or, rather, don't, because I guess it's not his pet subject. He told me all about it when he was getting better. There was gold there, all right, in chunks. It only needed to be dug for. And somebody else did the digging. Of all the skin games! It made me pretty hot under the collar, and it wasn't *me* that was stung.

"Out there you can't buy land if you're a foreigner; you have to lease it from the natives. Poor old Hank leased his bit, all right, and when he'd got to his claim he found somebody else working on it. It seemed there had been a flaw in his agreement and the owners had let it over his head to these other guys, who had slipped them more than what Hank had done."

"What did he do?"

"He couldn't do anything. They were the right side of the law, or what they call law out there. There was nothing to do except beat it back again three hundred miles to the coast. That's where they got the fever which finished Hank. So you can understand," concluded the third officer, "that Mr. Winfield isn't in what you can call a sunny mood. If I were you, I'd go and talk to some one else, if conversation's what you need."

Kirk stood motionless at the rail, thinking. It was not what was past that occupied his thoughts, as the third officer had supposed; it was the future.

The forlorn hope had failed; he was limping back to Ruth wounded and broken. He had sent her a wireless message. She would be at the dock to meet him. How could he face her? Fate had been against him, it was true, but he was in no mood to make excuses for himself. He had failed. That was the beginning and the end of it. He had set out to bring back wealth and comfort to her, and he was returning empty-handed.

That was what the immediate future held, the meeting with Ruth. And after? His imagination was not equal to the task of considering that. He had failed as an artist. There was no future for him there. He must find some other work. But he was fit for no other work. He had had no training. What could he do in a city where keenness of competition is a tradition? It would be as if an unarmed man should attack a fortress.

The thought of the years he had wasted was very bitter. Looking back, he could see how fate had tricked him into throwing away his one talent. He had had promise. With hard work he could have become an artist, a professional—a man whose work was worth money in the open market. He had never had it in him to be a great artist, but he had had the facility which goes to make a good worker of the second class. He had it still. Given the time for hard study, it was still in him to take his proper place among painters.

But time for study was out of his reach now. He must set to work at once, without a day's delay, on something which would bring him immediate money. The reflection brought his mind back abruptly to the practical consideration of the future.

Before him, as he stood there, the ragged battlements of New York seemed to frown down at him with a cold cruelty that paralyzed his mind. He had seen them a hundred times before. They should have been familiar and friendly. But this morning they were strange and sinister. The skyline which daunts the emigrant as he comes up the bay to his new home struck fear into Kirk's heart.

He turned away and began to walk up and down the deck.

He felt tired and lonely. For the first time he realized just what it meant to him that he should never see Hank again. It had been hard, almost impossible, till now to force his mind to face that fact. He had winced away from it. But now it would not be avoided. It fell upon him like a shadow.

Hank had filled a place of his own in Kirk's life. Theirs had been one of those smooth friendships which absence cannot harm. Often they had not seen each other for months at a time. Indeed, now that he thought of it, Hank was generally away; and he could not remember that they had ever exchanged letters. Yet even so there had been a bond between them which had never broken. And now Hank had dropped out.

Kirk began to think about death. As with most men of his temperament, it was a subject on which his mind had seldom dwelt, never for any length of time. His parents had died when he was too young to understand; and circumstances had shielded him from the shadow of the great mystery. Birth he understood; it had forced itself into the scheme of his life; but death till now had been a stranger to him.

The realization of it affected him oddly. In a sense, he found it stimulating; not stimulating as birth had been, but more subtly. He could recall vividly the thrill that had come to him with the birth of his son. For days he had walked as one in a trance. The world had seemed unreal, like an opium-smoker's dream. There had been magic everywhere.

But death had exactly the opposite effect. It made everything curiously real—himself most of all. He had the sensation, as he thought of Hank, of knowing himself for the first time. Somehow he felt strengthened, braced for the fight, as a soldier might who sees his comrade fall at his side.

There was something almost vindictive in the feeling that came to him. It was too vague to be analyzed, but it filled him with a desire to fight, gave him a sense of determination of which he had never before been conscious. It toughened him, and made the old, easy-going Kirk Winfield seem a stranger at whom he could look with detachment and a certain contempt.

As he walked back along the deck the battlements of the city met his gaze once more. But now they seemed less formidable.

In the leisurely fashion of the homecoming ship the Santa Barbara slid into her dock. The gangplank was thrust out. Kirk walked ashore.

For a moment he thought that Ruth had not come to meet him. Then his heart leaped madly. He had seen her.

There are worse spots in the world than the sheds of the New York customs, but few more desolate; yet to Kirk just then the shadowy vastness seemed a sunlit garden. A flame of happiness blazed up in his mind, blotting out in an instant the forebodings which had lurked there like evil creatures in a dark vault. The future, with its explanations and plans, could take care of itself. Ruth was a thing of the present.

He put his arms round her and held her. The friendly drummer, who chanced to be near, observed them with interest and a good deal of pleasure. The third officer's story had temporarily destroyed his feeling that all was right with the world, and his sympathetic heart welcomed this evidence that life held compensations even for men who had been swindled out of valuable gold-mines.

"YOU POOR BOY, HOW THIN YOU ARE!"

"I guess he's not feeling so worse, after all," he mused, and went on his way with an easy mind to be fawned upon by his grateful firm.

Ruth was holding Kirk at arm's length, her eyes full of tears at the sight.

"You poor boy, how thin you are!"

"I had fever. It's an awful place for fever out there."

"Kirk!"

"Oh, I'm all right now. The voyage set me up. They made a great fuss over me on board."

Ruth's hand was clinging to his arm. He squeezed it against his side. It was wonderful to him, this sense of being together again after these centuries of absence. It drove from his mind the thought of all the explanations which sooner or later he had got to make. Whatever might come after, he would keep this moment in his memory golden and untarnished.

"Don't you worry about me," he said. "Now that I've found you again I'm feeling better than I ever did in my life. You wait till you see me sparring with Steve to-morrow. By the way, how is Steve?"

"Splendid."

"And Bill?"

Ruth drew herself up haughtily.

"You dare to ask about your son after Steve? How clumsy that sounds! I mean you dare to put Steve before your son. I believe you've only just realized that you have a son."

"I've only just realized there's anybody or anything in the world except my wife."

"Well, after that I suppose I've got to forgive you. Since you have asked after Bill at last, I may tell you that he's very well indeed."

Kirk's eyes glowed.

"He ought to be a great kid by now."

"He is."

"And Mamie? Have you still got her?"

"I wouldn't lose her for a million."

"And Whiskers?"

"I'm afraid Whiskers is gone."

"Not dead?"

"No. I gave him away."

"For Heaven's sake! Why?"

"Well, dear, the fact is, I've come round to Aunt Lora's way of thinking."

"Eh?"

"About germs."

Kirk laughed, the first real laugh he had had for a year.

"That insane fad of hers!"

Ruth was serious.

"I have," she said. "We're taking a great deal more care of Bill than in the old days. I hate to think of the way I used to let him run around wild then. He might have died."

"What nonsense! He was simply bursting with health all the time."

"I had a horrible shock after you left," Ruth went on. "The poor little fellow was awfully ill with some kind of a fever. The doctor almost gave him up."

"Good Heavens!"

"Aunt Lora helped me to nurse him, and she made me see how I had been exposing him to all sorts of risks, and—well, now we guard against them."

There was a silence.

"I grew to rely on her a great deal, Kirk, when you were away. You know I always used to before we were married. She's so wonderfully strong. And then when your letters stopped coming—"

"There aren't any postal arrangements out there in the interior. It was the worst part of it—not being able to write to you or hear from you. Heavens, what an exile I've been this last year! Anything may have happened!"

"Perhaps something has," said Ruth mysteriously.

"What do you mean?"

"Wait and see. Oh, I know one thing that has happened. I've been looking at you all this while trying to think what it was. You've grown a beard, and it looks perfectly horrid."

"Sheer laziness. It shall come off this very day. I knew you would hate it."

"I certainly do. It makes you look so old."

Kirk's face clouded.

"I feel old."

For the first time since he had left the ship the memory of Hank had come back to him. The sight of Ruth had driven it away, but now it swept back on him. The golden moment was over. Life with all its troubles and its explanations and its burdening sense of failure must be faced.

"What's the matter?" asked Ruth, startled by the sudden change.

"I was thinking of poor old Hank."

"Where is Mr. Jardine? Didn't he come back with you?"

"He's dead, dear," said Kirk gently. "He died of fever while we were working our way to the coast."

"Oh!"

It was the idea of death that shocked Ruth, not the particular manifestation of it. Hank had not touched her life. She had begun by disliking him and ended by feeling for him the tolerant sort of affection which she might have bestowed upon a dog or a cat. Hank as a man was nothing to her, and she could not quite keep her indifference out of her voice.

It was only later, when he looked back on this conversation, that Kirk realized this. At the moment he was unconscious of it, significant as it was of the fact that there were points at which his mind and Ruth's did not touch.

When Ruth spoke again it was to change the subject.

"Well, Kirk," she said, "have you come back with your trunk crammed with nuggets? You haven't said a word about the mine yet, and I'm dying to know."

He groaned inwardly. The moment he had been dreading had arrived more swiftly than he had expected. It was time for him to face facts.

"No," he said shortly.

Ruth looked at him curiously. She met his eyes and saw the pain in them, and intuition told her in an instant what Kirk, stumbling through his story, could not have told her in an hour.

She squeezed his arm affectionately.

"Don't tell me," she said. "I understand. And it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter a bit."

"Doesn't matter? But—"

Ruth's eyes were dancing.

"Kirk, dear, I've got something to tell you. Wait till we get outside."

"What do you mean?"

"You'll soon see."

They went out into the street. Against the curb a large red automobile was standing. The chauffeur touched his cap as he saw them. Kirk stared at him dumbly.

" In you get, dear," said Ruth.

She met his astonished gaze with a smile of triumph. This was her moment, the moment for which she had been waiting. The chauffeur started the machine.

" I don't understand. Whose car is this?"

" Mine. Yours. Ours. Oh, Kirk, darling, I was so afraid that you would come back bulging with a fortune that would make my little one look like nothing. But you haven't, you haven't, and it's just splendid." She caught his hand and pressed it. " It's simply sweet of you to look so astonished. I was hoping you would. This car belongs to us, and there's another just as big besides, and a house, and — oh — everything you can think of. Kirk, dear, we've nothing to worry us any longer. We're rich!"

CHAPTER II

AN UNKNOWN PATH

Kirk blinked. He closed his eyes and opened them again. The automobile was still there, and he was still in it. Ruth was still gazing at him with that triumphant look in her eyes. The chauffeur, silent emblem of a substantial bank-balance, still sat stiffly at the steering-wheel.

" Rich?" Kirk repeated.

" Rich," Ruth assured him.

" I don't understand."

Ruth's smile faded.

" Poor father—"

" Your father?"

" He died just after you sailed. Just before Bill got ill." She gave a little sigh. " Kirk, how odd life is."

" But—"

" It was terrible. It was some kind of a stroke. He had been working too hard and taking no exercise. You know when he sent Steve away that time he didn't engage anybody else in his place. He went back to his old way of living, which the doctor had warned him against. He worked and worked, until one day, Bailey says, he fainted at the office. They brought him home, and he just went out like a burned-out candle. I—I went to him, but for a long time he wouldn't see me.

" Oh, Kirk, the hours I spent in the library hoping that he would let me come to him! But he never did till right at the end. Then I went up, and he was dying. He couldn't speak. I don't know now how he felt toward me at the last. I kissed him. He was all shrunk to nothing. I had a horrible feeling that I had never been a real daughter to him. But—but—you know, he made it difficult, awfully difficult. And then he died; Bailey was on one side of the bed and I was on the other, and the nurse and the doctor were whispering outside the door. I could hear them through the transom."

She slipped her hand into Kirk's and sat silent while the car slid into the traffic of Fifth Avenue. For the second time the shadow of the Great Mystery had fallen on the brightness of the perfect morning.

The car had stopped at Thirty-Fourth Street to allow the hurrying crowds to cross the avenue. Kirk looked at them with a feeling of sadness. It was not caused by John Bannister's death. He was too honest to be able to plunge himself into false emotion at will. His feeling was more a vague uneasiness, almost a presentiment. Things changed so quickly in this world. Old landmarks shifted as this crowd of strangers was shifting before him now, hurrying into his life and hurrying out of it.

He, too, had changed. Ruth, though he had detected no signs of it, must be different from the Ruth he had left a year ago. The old life was dead. What had the new life in store for him? Wealth for one thing—other standards of living—new experiences.

An odd sensation of regret that this stream of gold had descended upon him deepened his momentary depression. They had been so happy, he and Ruth and the kid, in the old days of the hermit's cell. Something that was almost a superstitious fear of this unexpected legacy came upon him.

It was unlucky money, grudgingly given at the eleventh hour. He seemed to feel John Bannister watching him with a sneer, and he was afraid of him. His nerves were still a little unstrung from the horror of his wanderings, and the fever had left him weak. It seemed to him that there was a curse on the old man's wealth, that somehow it was destined to bring him unhappiness.

The policeman waved his hand. The car jerked forward. The sudden movement brought him to himself. He smiled, a little ashamed of having been so fanciful; the sky was blue; the sun shone; a cool breeze put the joy of life into him; and at his side Ruth sat, smiling now. From her, too, the cloud had been lifted.

"It seems like a fairy-story," said Kirk, breaking the silence that had fallen between them.

"I think it must have been the thought of Bill that made him do it," said Ruth. "He left half his money to Bailey and half to me during my lifetime. Bailey's married now, by the way." She paused. "I'm afraid father never forgave you, dear," she added. "He made Bailey the trustee for the money, and it goes to Bill in trust after my death."

She looked at him rather nervously it seemed to Kirk. The terms of the will had been the cause of some trouble to her. Especially had she speculated on his reception of the news that Bailey was to play so important a part in the administration of the money. Kirk had never told her what had passed between him and Bailey that afternoon in the studio, but her quick intelligence had enabled her to guess at the truth; and she was aware that the minds of the two men, their temperaments, were naturally antagonistic.

Kirk's reception of the news relieved her.

"Of course," he said. "He couldn't do anything else. He knew nothing of me except that I was a kind of man with whom he was quite out of sympathy. He mistrusted all artists, I expect, in a bunch. And, anyway, an artist is pretty sure to be a bad man of business. He would know that. And—and, well, what I mean is, it strikes me as a very sensible arrangement. Why are we stopping here?"

The car had drawn up before a large house on the upper avenue, one of those houses which advertise affluence with as little reticence as a fat diamond solitaire.

"We live here," said Ruth, laughing.

Kirk drew a long breath.

"Do we? By George!" he exclaimed, "I see it's going to take me quite a while to get used to this state of things."

A thought struck him.

"How about the studio? Have you got rid of it?"

"Of course not. The idea! After the perfect times we had there! We're going to keep it on as an annex. Every now and then, when we are tired of being rich, we'll creep off there and boil eggs over the gas-stove and pretend we are just ordinary persons again."

"And oftener than every now and then this particular plutocrat is going to creep off there and try to teach himself to paint pictures."

Ruth nodded.

"Yes, I think you ought to have a hobby. It's good for you."

Kirk said nothing. But it was not as a hobby that he was regarding his painting. He had come to a knowledge of realities in the wilderness and to an appreciation of the fact that he had a soul which could not be kept alive except by honest work.

He had the decent man's distaste for living on his wife's money. He supposed it was inevitable that a certain portion of it must go to his support, but he was resolved that there should be in the sight of the gods who look down on human affairs at least a reasonable excuse for his existence. If work could make him anything approaching a real artist, he would become one.

Meanwhile he was quite willing that Ruth should look upon his life-work as a pleasant pastime to save him from ennui. Even to his wife a man is not always eager to exhibit his soul in its nakedness.

"By the way," said Ruth, "you won't find George Pennicut at the studio. He has gone back to England."

"I'm sorry. I liked George."

"He liked you. He left all sorts of messages. He nearly wept when he said good-by. But he wouldn't stop. In a burst of confidence he told me what the trouble was. Our blue sky had got on his nerves. He wanted a London drizzle again. He said the thought of it made him homesick."

Kirk entered the house thoughtfully. Somehow this last piece of news had put the coping-stone on the edifice of his—his what? Depression? It was hardly that. No, it was rather a kind of vague regret for the life which had so definitely ended, the feeling which the Romans called *desiderium* and the Greeks *pothos*. The defection of George Pennicut was a small thing in itself, but it meant the removal of another landmark.

"We had some bully good times in that studio," he said.

The words were a requiem.

The first person whom he met in this

great house, in the kingdom of which he was to be king-consort, was a butler of incredible stateliness. This was none other than Steve's friend Keggs. But round the outlying portions of this official he had perceived, as the door opened, a section of a woman in a brown dress.

The butler moving to one side, he found himself confronting Mrs. Lora Delane Porter.

If other things in Kirk's world had changed, time had wrought in vain upon the great authoress. She looked as masterful, as unyielding, and as efficient as she had looked at the time of his departure. She took his hand without emotion and inspected him keenly.

" You are thinner," she remarked.

" I said that, Aunt Lora," said Ruth. " Poor boy, he's a skeleton."

" You are not so robust."

" I have been ill."

Ruth interposed.

" He's had fever, Aunt Lora, and you are not to tease him."

" I should be the last person to tease any man. What sort of fever?"

" I think it was a blend of all sorts," replied Kirk. " A kind of Irish stew of a fever."

" You are not infectious?"

" Certainly not."

Mrs. Porter checked Ruth as she was about to speak.

" We owe it to William to be careful," she explained. " After all the trouble we have taken to exclude him from germs it is only reasonable to make these inquiries."

" Come along, dear," said Ruth, " and I'll show you the house. Don't mind Aunt Lora," she whispered; " she means well, and she really is splendid with Bill."

Kirk followed her. He was feeling chilled again. His old mistrust of Mrs. Porter revived. If their brief interview was to be taken as evidence, she seemed to have regained entirely her old ascendency over Ruth. He felt vaguely uneasy, as a man might who walks in a powder magazine.

" Aunt Lora lives here now," observed Ruth casually, as they went up-stairs.

Kirk started.

" Literally, do you mean? Is this her home?"

Ruth smiled at him over her shoulder.

" She won't interfere with you," she said. " Surely this great house is large enough for the three of us. Besides, she's so devoted to Bill. She looks after him all the time; of course, nowadays I don't get quite so much chance to be with him myself. One has an awful lot of calls on one. I feel Bill is so safe with Aunt Lora on the premises."

She stopped at a door on the first floor.

" This is Bill's nursery. He's out just now. Mamie takes him for a drive every morning when it's fine."

Something impelled Kirk to speak.

" Don't you ever take him for walks in the morning now?" he asked. " He used to love it."

" Silly! Of course I do, when I can manage it. For drives, rather. Aunt Lora is rather against his walking much in the city. He might so easily catch something, you know."

She opened the door.

" There!" she said. " What do you think of that for a nursery?"

If Kirk had spoken his mind he would have said that of all the ghastly nurseries the human brain could have conceived this was the ghastliest. It was a large, square room, and to Kirk's startled eyes had much the appearance of an operating-theater at a hospital.

There was no carpet on the tiled floor. The walls, likewise tiled, were so bare that the eye ached contemplating them. In the corner by the window stood the little white cot. Beside it on the wall hung a large thermometer. Various knobs of brass decorated the opposite wall. At the farther end of the room was a bath, complete with shower and all the other apparatus of the modern tub.

It was probably the most horrible room in all New York.

" Well, what do you think of it?" demanded Ruth proudly.

Kirk gazed at her, speechless. This, he said to himself, was Ruth, his wife, who had housed his son in the spare bedroom of the studio and allowed a shaggy Irish terrier to sleep on his bed; who had permitted him to play by the hour in the dust of the studio floor, who had even assisted him to do so by descending into the dust herself in the rôle of a bear or a snake.

What had happened to this world from which he had been absent but one short year? Was everybody mad, or was he hopelessly behind the times?

" Well?" Ruth reminded him.

Kirk eyed the dreadful room.

"It looks clean," he said at last.

"It is clean," said the voice of Lora Delane Porter proudly behind him. She had followed them up the stairs to do the honors of the nursery, the center of her world. "It is essentially clean. There is not an object in that room which is not carefully sterilized night and morning with a weak solution of boric acid!"

"Even Mamie?" inquired Kirk.

It had been his intention to be mildly jocular, but Mrs. Porter's reply showed him that in jest he had spoken truth.

"Certainly. Have you any idea, Kirk, of the number of germs there are on the surface of the human body? It runs into billions. You"—she fixed him with her steely eye—"you are at the present moment one mass of microbes."

"I sneaked through quarantine, all right."

"To the adult there is not so much danger in these microbes, provided he or she maintains a reasonable degree of personal cleanliness. That is why adults may be permitted to mix with other adults without preliminary sterilization. But in the case of a growing child it is entirely different. No precaution is excessive. So—"

From below at this point there came the sound of the front-door bell. Ruth went to the landing and looked over the banisters.

HE LEAPED AT KIRK AND KIRK SWUNG HIM UP IN THE AIR

"That ought to be Bill and Mamie back from their drive," she said.

The sound of a child's voice came to Kirk as he stood listening; and as he heard it all the old feeling of paternal pride and excitement, which had left him during his wanderings, swept over him like a wave. He reproached himself that, while the memory of Ruth had been with him during every waking moment of the past year, there had been occasions when that of William Bannister had become a little faded.

He ran down the stairs.

"Hello, Mamie!" he said. "How are you? You're looking well."

Mamie greeted him with the shy smile which was wont to cause such havoc in Steve's heart.

"And who's this you've got with you? Mamie, you know you've no business going about with young men like this. Who is he?"

He stood looking at William Bannister, and William Bannister stood looking at him, Kirk smiling, William staring with the intense gravity of childhood and trying to place this bearded stranger among his circle of friends. He seemed to be thinking that the familiarity of the other's manner indicated a certain amount of previous acquaintanceship.

"Watch that busy brain working," said Kirk. "He's trying to place me. It's all right, Bill, old man; it's my fault. I had no right to spring myself on you with eight feet of beard. It isn't giving you a square deal. Never mind, it's coming off in a few minutes, never to return, and then, perhaps, you'll remember that you've a father."

"Fa-a-a-ar!" shrieked William Bannister triumphantly, taking the cue with admirable swiftness.

He leaped at Kirk, and Kirk swung him up in the air. It was quite an effort, for William Bannister had grown astonishingly in the past year.

"Pop," said he firmly, as if resolved to prevent any possibility of mistake. "Daddy," he added, continuing to play upon the theme. He summed up. "You're my pop."

Then, satisfied that this was final and that there could now be no chance for Kirk to back out of the contract, he reached out a hand and gave a tug at the beard which had led to all the confusion.

"What's this?"

"You may well ask," said Kirk. "I got struck that way because I left you and mummy for a whole year. But now I'm back I'm going to be allowed to take it off and give it away. Whom shall I give it to? Steve? Do you think Steve would like it? Yes, you can go on pulling it; it won't break. On the other hand, I should just like to mention that it's hurting something fierce, my son. It's fastened on at the other end, you know."

"Why?"

"Don't ask me. That's the way it's built."

William Bannister obligingly disentangled himself from the beard.

"Where you been?" he inquired.

"Miles and miles away. You know the Battery?"

William Bannister nodded.

"Well, a long way past that. First I took a ship and went ever so many miles. Then I landed and went ever so many more miles, with all sorts of beasts trying to bite pieces out of me."

This interested William Bannister.

"Tigers?" he inquired.

"I didn't actually see any tigers, but I expect they were sneaking around. There were mosquitoes, though. You know what a mosquito is?"

William nodded.

"Bumps," he observed crisply.

"That's right. You see this lump here, just above my mouth? Well, that's not a mosquito-bite; that's my nose; but think of something about that size and you'll have some idea of what a mosquito-bite is like out there. But why am I boring you with my troubles? Tell me all about yourself. You've certainly been growing, whatever else you may have been doing while I've been away; I can hardly lift you. Has Steve taught you to box yet?"

At this moment he was aware that he had become the center of a small group. Looking round, he found himself gazing into a face so stiff with horror and disapproval that he was startled almost into dropping William. What could have happened to induce Mrs. Porter to look like that he could not imagine; but her expression checked his flow of light conversation as if it had been turned off with a switch. He lowered Bill to the ground.

"What on earth's the matter?" he asked. "What has happened?"

Without replying, Mrs. Porter made a gesture in the direction of the nursery, which had the effect of sending Mamie and her charge off again on the journey upstairs which Kirk's advent had interrupted. Bill seemed sorry to go, but he trudged sturdily on without remark. Kirk followed him with his eyes till he disappeared at the bend of the stairway.

"What's the matter?" he repeated.

"Are you mad, Kirk?" demanded Mrs. Porter in a tense voice.

Kirk turned helplessly to Ruth.

"You had better let me explain, Aunt Lora," she said. "Of course Kirk couldn't be expected to know, poor boy. You seem to forget that he has only this minute come into the house."

Aunt Lora was not to be appeased.

"That is absolutely no excuse. He has just left a ship where he cannot have failed to pick up bacilli of every description. He has himself only recently recovered from a probably infectious fever. He is wearing a beard, notoriously the most germ-ridden abomination in existence."

Kirk started. He was not proud of his beard, but he had not regarded it as quite the pestilential thing which it seemed to be in the eyes of Mrs. Porter.

"And he picks up the child!" she went on. "Hugs him! Kisses him! And you say he could not have known better! Surely the most elementary common sense—"

"Aunt Lora!" said Ruth.

She spoke quietly, but there was a note in her voice which acted on Mrs. Porter like magic. Her flow of words ceased abruptly. It was a small incident, but it had the effect of making Kirk, grateful as he was for the interruption, somehow vaguely uneasy for a moment.

It seemed to indicate some subtle change in Ruth's character, some new quality of hardness added to it. The Ruth he had left when he sailed for Colombia would, he felt, have been incapable of quelling her masterful aunt so very decisively and with such an economy of words. It suggested previous warfare, in which the elder woman had been subdued to a point where a mere exclamation could pull her up when she forgot herself.

Kirk felt uncomfortable. He did not like these sudden discoveries about Ruth.

"I will explain to Kirk," she said. "You go up and see that everything is right in the nursery."

And—amazing spectacle!—off went Mrs. Porter without another word.

Ruth put her arm in Kirk's and led him off to the smoking-room.

"You may smoke a cigar while I tell you all about Bill," she said.

Kirk lit a cigar, bewildered. It is always unpleasant to be the person to whom things have to be explained.

"Poor old boy," Ruth went on, "you certainly are thin. But about Bill. I am afraid you are going to be a little upset about Bill, Kirk. Aunt Lora has no tact, and she will make a speech on every possible occasion; but she was right just now. It really was rather dangerous, picking Bill up like that and kissing him."

Kirk stared.

"I don't understand. Did you expect me to wave my hand to him? Or would it have been more correct to bow?"

"Don't be so satirical, Kirk; you wither me. No, seriously, you really mustn't kiss Bill. I never do. Nobody does."

"What!"

"I dare say it sounds ridiculous to you, but you were not here when he was so ill and nearly died. You remember what I was telling you at the dock? About giving Whiskers away? Well, this is all part of it. After what happened I feel, like Aunt Lora, that we simply can't take too many precautions. You saw his nursery. Well, it would be simply a waste of money giving him a nursery like that if he was allowed to be exposed to infection when he was out of it."

"And I am supposed to be infectious?"

"Not more than anybody else. There's no need to be hurt about it. It's just as much a sacrifice for me."

"So nobody makes a fuss over Bill now—is that it?"

"Well, no. Not in the way you mean."

"Pretty dreary outlook for the kid, isn't it?"

"It's all for his good."

"What a ghastly expression."

Ruth left her chair and came and sat on the arm of Kirk's. She ruffled his hair lightly with the tips of her fingers. Kirk, who had been disposed to be militant, softened instantly. The action brought back a flood of memories. It conjured up recollections of peaceful evenings in the old studio, for this had been a favorite habit of Ruth's. It made him feel that he loved her more than he had ever done in his life; and—incidentally—that he was a brute to try and thwart her in anything whatsoever.

"I know it's horrid for you, dear old boy," said Ruth coaxingly; "but do be good and not make a fuss about it. Not kissing Bill doesn't mean that you need be any the less fond of him. I know it will be strange at first—I didn't get used to it for ever so long—but, honestly, it *is* for his good, however ghastly the expression of the thing may sound."

"It's treating the kid like a wretched invalid," grumbled Kirk.

"You wait till you see him playing, and then you'll know if he's a wretched invalid or not."

"May I see him playing?"

"Don't be silly. Of course."

"I thought I had better ask. Being the perambulating plague-spot I am, I was not taking any risks."

"How horribly self-centered you are! You will talk as if you were in some special sort of quarantine. I keep on telling you it's the same for all of us."

"I suppose when I'm with him I shall have to be sterilized?"

"I don't think it necessary myself, but Aunt Lora does, so it's always done. It humors her, and it really isn't any trouble. Besides, it may be necessary, after all. One never knows, and it's best to be on the safe side."

Kirk laid down his cigar firmly, the cold cigar which stress of emotion had made him forget to keep alight.

"Ruth, old girl," he said earnestly, "this is pure lunacy."

Ruth's fingers wandered idly through his hair. She did not speak for some moments.

"You will be good about it, won't you, Kirk dear?" she said at last.

It is curious what a large part hair and its treatment may play in the undoing of strong men. The case of Samson may be recalled in this connection. Kirk, with Ruth ruffling the wiry growth that hid his scalp, was incapable of serious opposition. He tried to be morose and resolute, but failed miserably.

"Oh, very well," he grunted.

"That's a good boy. And you promise you won't go hugging Bill again?"

"Very well."

"There's an angel for you. Now I'll fix you a cocktail as a reward."

"Well, mind you, sterilize it carefully."

Ruth laughed. Having gained her point she could afford to. She made the cocktail and brought it to him.

"And now I'll be off and dress, and then you can take me out to lunch somewhere."

"Aren't you dressed?"

"My goodness, no. Not for going to restaurants. You forget that I'm one of the idle rich now. I spend my whole day putting on different kinds of clothes. I've a position to keep up now, Mr. Winfield."

Kirk lit a fresh cigar and sat thinking. The old feeling of desolation which had attacked him as he came up the bay had returned. He felt like a stranger in a strange world. Life was not the same. Ruth was not the same. Nothing was the same.

The more he contemplated the new regulations affecting Bill the chillier and more unfriendly did they seem to him. He could not bring himself to realize Ruth as one of the great army of cranks preaching and carrying out the gospel of Lora Delane Porter. It seemed so at variance with her character as he had known it. He could not seriously bring himself to believe that she genuinely approved of these absurd restrictions. Yet, apparently she did.

He looked into the future. It had a gray and bleak aspect. He seemed to himself like a man gazing down an unknown path full of unknown perils.

CHAPTER III

THE MISADVENTURE OF STEVE

Kirk was not the only person whom the sudden change in the financial position of the Winfield family had hit hard. The blighting effects of sudden wealth had touched Steve while Kirk was still in Colombia.

In a sense, it had wrecked Steve's world. Nobody had told him to stop or even to diminish the number of his visits, but the fact remained that, by the time Kirk returned to New York, he had practically ceased to go to the house on Fifth Avenue.

For all his roughness, Steve possessed a delicacy which sometimes almost amounted to diffidence; and he did not need to be told that there was a substantial difference, as far as he was concerned, between the new headquarters of the family and the old. At the studio he had been accustomed to walk in when it pleased him, sure of a welcome; but he had an idea that he did not fit as neatly into the atmosphere of Fifth Avenue as he had done into that of Sixty-First Street; and nobody disabused him of it.

It was perhaps the presence of Mrs. Porter that really made the difference. In spite of the compliments she had sometimes paid to his common sense, Mrs. Porter did not put Steve at his ease. He was almost afraid of her. Consequently, when he came to Fifth Avenue, he remained below stairs, talking pugilism with Keggs.

It was from Keggs that he first learned of the changes that had taken place in the surroundings of William Bannister.

"I've 'ad the privilege of serving in some of the best houses in England," said the butler one evening, as they sat smoking in the pantry, "and *I've* never seen such goings on. I don't hold with the pampering of children."

"What do you mean, pampering?" asked Steve.

"Well, Lord love a duck!" replied the butler, who in his moments of relaxation was addicted to homely expletives of the lower London type. "If you don't call it pampering, what do you call pampering? He ain't allowed to touch nothing that ain't been—it's slipped my memory what they call it, but it's got something to do with microbes. They sprinkle stuff on his toys and on his clothes and on his nurse; what's more, and on any one who comes to see him. And his nursery ain't what *I* call a nursery at all. It's nothing more or less than a private 'ospital, with its white tiles and its antiseptics and what not, and the temperature just so and no lower nor higher. I don't call it 'aving a proper faith in Providence, pampering and fussing over a child to that extent."

"You're stringing me!"

"Not a bit of it, Mr. Dingle. I've seen the nursery with my own eyes, and I 'ave my information direct from the young person who looks after the child."

"But, say, in the old days that kid was about the dandiest little sport that ever came down the pike. You seen him that day I brought him round to say hello to the old man. He didn't have no nursery at all then, let alone one with white tiles. I've seen him come up off the studio floor looking like a coon with the dust. And Miss Ruth tickled to see him like that, too. For the love of Mike, what's come to her?"

"It's all along of this Porter," said Keggs morosely. "She's done it all. And if," he went on with sudden heat, "she don't break her 'abit of addressing me in a tone what the 'umblest dorg would resent, I'm liable to forget my place and give her a piece of my mind. Coming round and interfering!"

"Got *your* goat, has she?" commented Steve, interested. "She's what you'd call a tough proposition, that dame. I used to have my eye on her all the time in the old days, waiting for her to start something. But say, I'd like to see this nursery you've been talking about. Take me up and let me lamp it."

Keggs shook his head.

"I daresn't, Mr. Dingle. It 'ud be as much as my place is worth."

"But, darn it! I'm the kid's godfather."

"That wouldn't make no difference to that Porter. She'd pick on me just the same. But, if you care to risk it, Mr. Dingle, I'll show you where it is. You'll find the young person up there. She'll tell you more about the child's 'abits and daily life than I can."

"Good enough," said Steve.

He had not seen Mamie for some time, and absence had made the heart grow fonder. It embittered him that his meetings with her were all too rare nowadays. She seemed to have abandoned the practise of walking altogether, for, whenever he saw her now she was driving in the automobile with Bill. Keggs's information about the new system threw some light upon this and made him all the more anxious to meet her now.

It was a curious delusion of Steve's that he was always going to pluck up courage and propose to Mamie the very next time he saw her. This had gone on now for over two years, but he still clung to it. Repeated failures to reveal his burning emotions never caused him to lose the conviction that he would do it for certain next time.

It was in his customary braced-up, do-or-die frame of mind that he entered the nursery now.

His visit to Keggs had been a rather late one and had lasted some time before the subject of the White Hope had been broached, with the result that, when Steve arrived among the white tiles and antiseptics, he found his godson in bed and asleep. In a chair by the cot Mamie sat sewing.

Her eyes widened with surprise when she saw who the visitor was, and she put a finger to her lip and pointed to the sleeper. And, as we have to record another of the long list of Steve's failures to propose, we may say here, in excuse, that this reception took a good deal of the edge off the dashing resolution which had been his up to that moment. It made him feel self-conscious from the start.

" Whatever brings you up here, Steve?" whispered Mamie.

It was not a very tactful remark, perhaps, considering that Steve was the child's godfather, and, as such, might reasonably expect to be allowed a free pass to his nursery; but Mamie, like Keggs, had fallen so under the domination of Lora Delane Porter that she had grown to consider it almost a natural law that no one came to see Bill unless approved of and personally conducted by her.

Steve did not answer. He was gaping at the fittings of the place in which he found himself. It was precisely as Keggs had described it, white tiles and all.

He was roused from his reflections by the approach of Mamie, or, rather, not so much by her approach as by the fact that at this moment she suddenly squirted something at him. It was cold and wet and hit him in the face before, as he put it to Keggs later, he could get his guard up.

" For the love of—"

" Sh!" said Mamie warningly.

" What's the idea? What are you handing me?"

" I've got to. It's to sterilize you. I do it to every one."

" Gee! You've got a swell job! Well, go to it, then. Shoot! I'm ready."

" It's boric acid," explained Mamie.

" I shouldn't wonder. Is this all part of the Porter circus?"

" Yes."

" Where is she?" inquired Steve in sudden alarm. " Is she likely to butt in?"

" No. She's out."

" Good," said Steve, and sat down, relieved, to resume his inspection of the room.

When he had finished he drew a deep breath.

" Well!" he said softly. " Say, Mamie, what do *you* think about it?"

" I'm not paid to think about it, Steve."

" That means you agree with me that it's the punkest state of things you ever struck. Well, you're quite right. It is. It's a shame to think of that innocent kid having this sort of deal handed to him. Why, just think of him at the studio!"

But Mamie, whatever her private views, was loyal to her employers. She refused to be drawn into a discussion on the subject.

" Have you been down-stairs with Mr. Keggs, Steve?"

" Yes. It was him that told me about all this. Say, Mame, we ain't seen much of each other lately."

" No."

" Mighty little."

" Yes."

Having got as far as this, Steve should, of course, have gone resolutely ahead. After all, it is not such a very long step from telling a girl in a hushed whisper with a shake in it that you have not seen much of her lately to hinting that you would like to see a great deal more of her in the future.

Steve was on the right lines, and he knew it; but that fatal lack of nerve which had wrecked him on all the other occasions when he had got as far as this undid him now. He relapsed into silence, and Mamie went on sewing.

In a way, if you shut your eyes to the white tiles and the thermometer and the brass knobs and the shower-bath, it was a peaceful scene; and Steve, as he sat there and watched Mamie sew, was stirred by it. Remove the white tiles, the thermometer, the brass knobs, and the shower-bath, and this was precisely the sort of scene his imagination conjured up when the business of life slackened sufficiently to allow him to dream dreams.

There he was, sitting in one chair; there was Mamie, sitting in another; and there in the corner was the little white cot—well, perhaps that was being a shade too prophetic; on the other hand, it always came into these dreams of his. There, in short, was everything arranged just as he pictured it; and all that was needed to make the picture real was for him to propose and Mamie to accept him.

It was the disturbing thought that the second condition did not necessarily follow on to the first that had kept Steve from taking the plunge for the last two years. Unlike the hero of the poem, he feared his fate too much to put it to the touch, to win or lose it all.

Presently the silence began to oppress Steve. Mamie had her needlework, and that apparently served her in lieu of conversation; but Steve had nothing to occupy him, and he began to grow restless. He always despised himself thoroughly for his feebleness on these occasions; and he despised himself now. He determined to make a big effort.

"Mame!" he said.

As he was nervous and had been silent so long that his vocal cords had gone off duty under the impression that their day's work was over, the word came out of him like a husky gun-shot. Mamie started, and the White Hope, who had been sleeping peacefully, stirred and muttered.

"S-h!" hissed Mamie.

Steve collapsed with the feeling that it was not his lucky night, while Mamie bent anxiously over the cot. The sleeper, however, did not wake. He gurgled, gave a sigh, then resumed his interrupted repose. Mamie returned to her seat.

"Yes?" she said, as if nothing had occurred, and as if there had been no interval between Steve's remark and her reply.

Steve could not equal her calmness. He had been strung up when he spoke, and the interruption had undone him. He reflected ruefully that he might have said something to the point if he had been allowed to go straight on; now he had forgotten what he had meant to say.

"Oh, nothing," he replied.

Silence fell once more on the nursery.

Steve was bracing himself up for another attack when suddenly there came a sound of voices from the stairs. One voice was a mere murmur, but the other was sharp and unmistakable, the incisive note of Lora Delane Porter. It brought Steve and Mamie to their feet simultaneously.

"What's it matter?" said Steve stoutly, answering the panic in Mamie's eyes. "It's not her house, and I got a perfect right to be here."

"You don't know her. I shall get into trouble."

Mamie was pale with apprehension. She knew her Lora Delane Porter, and she knew what would happen if Steve were to be discovered there. It was, as Keggs had put it, as much as her place was worth.

For a brief instant Mamie faced a future in which she was driven from Bill's presence into outer darkness, dismissed, and told never to return. That was what would happen. Sitting and talking with Steve in the sacred nursery at this time of night was a crime, and she had known it all the time. But she had been glad to see Steve again after all this while—if Steve had known how glad, he would certainly have found courage and said what he had so often failed to say—and, knowing that Mrs. Porter was out, she had thought the risk of his presence worth taking. Now, with discovery imminent, panic came upon her.

The voices were quite close now. There was no doubt of the destination of the speakers. They were heading slowly but directly for the nursery.

Steve, not being fully abreast of the new rules and regulations of the sacred apartment, could not read Mamie's mind completely. He did not know that, under Mrs. Porter's code, the admission of a visitor during the hours of sleep was a felony in the first degree, punishable by instant dismissal. But Mamie's face and her brief reference to trouble were enough to tell him that the position was critical, and with the instinct of the trapped he looked round him for cover.

But the White Hope's nursery was not constructed with a view to providing cover for bulky gentlemen who should not have been there. It was as bare as a billiard-table as far as practicable hiding-places were concerned.

And then his eye caught the water-proof sheet of the shower-bath. Behind that there was just room for concealment.

With a brief nod of encouragement to Mamie, he leaped at it. The door opened as he disappeared.

Mrs. Porter's rules concerning visitors, though stringent as regarded Mamie, were capable of being relaxed when she herself was the person to relax them. She had a visitor with her now—a long, severe-looking lady with a sharp nose surmounted by spectacles, who, taking in the white tiles, the thermometer, the cot, and the brass knobs in a single comprehensive glance, observed: "Admirable!"

Mrs. Porter was obviously pleased with this approval. Her companion was a woman doctor of great repute among the advanced apostles of hygiene; and praise from her was praise indeed. She advanced into the room with an air of suppressed pride.

"These tiles are thoroughly cleaned

twice each day with an antiseptic solution."

"Just so," said the spectacled lady.

"You notice the thermometer."

"Exactly."

"Those knobs you see on the wall have various uses."

"Quite."

They examined the knobs with an air of profound seriousness, Mrs. Porter erect and complacent, the other leaning forward and peering through her spectacles. Mamie took advantage of their backs and turned to cast a hurried glance at the water-proof curtain. It was certainly an admirable screen; no sign of Steve was visible; but nevertheless she did not cease to quake.

"This," said Mrs. Porter, "controls the heat. This, this, and this are for the ventilation."

"Just so, just so, just so," said the doctor. "And this, of course, is for the shower-bath? I understand!"

And, extending a firm finger, she gave the knob a forceful push.

Mrs. Porter nodded.

"That is the cold shower," she said. "This is the hot. It is a very ingenious arrangement, one of Malcolmson's patents. There is a regulator at the side of the bath which enables the nurse to get just the correct temperature. I will turn on both, and then—"

It was as Mrs. Porter's hand was extended toward the knob that the paralysis which terror had put upon Mamie relaxed its grip. She had stood by without a movement while the cold water splashed down upon the hidden Steve. Her heart had ached for him, but she had not stirred. But now, with the prospect of allowing him to be boiled alive before her, she acted.

It is generally only on the stage that a little child comes to the rescue of adults at critical moments; but William Bannister was accorded the opportunity of doing so off it. It happened that at the moment of Mrs. Porter's entry Mamie had been standing near his cot, and she had not moved since. The consequence was that she was within easy reach of him; and, despair giving her what in the circumstances amounted to a flash of inspiration, she leaned quickly forward, even as Mrs. Porter's finger touched the knob, and gave the round head on the pillow a rapid push.

William Bannister sat up with a grunt, rubbed his eyes, and, seeing strangers, began to cry.

It was so obvious to Mrs. Porter and her companion, both from the evidence of their guilty consciences and the look of respectful reproach on Mamie's face, that the sound of their voices had disturbed the child, that they were routed from the start.

"Oh dear me! he is awake," said the lady doctor.

"I am afraid we did not lower our voices," added Mrs. Porter. "And yet William is usually such a sound sleeper. Perhaps we had better—"

"Just so," said the doctor.

"—go down-stairs while the nurse gets him off to sleep again."

"Quite."

The door closed behind them.

"Oh, Steve!" said Mamie.

The White Hope had gone to sleep again with the amazing speed of childhood, and Mamie was looking pityingly at the bedraggled object which had emerged cautiously from behind the waterproof.

"I got mine," muttered Steve ruefully. "You ain't got a towel anywheres, have you, Mame?"

Mamie produced a towel and watched him apologetically as he attempted to dry himself.

"I'm so sorry, Steve."

"Cut it out. It was my fault. I oughtn't to have been there. Say, it was a bit of luck the kid waking just then."

"Yes," said Mamie.

Observe the tricks that conscience plays us. If Mamie had told Steve what had caused William to wake he would certainly have been so charmed by her presence of mind, exerted on his behalf to save him from the warm fate which Mrs. Porter's unconscious hand had been about to bring down upon him, that he would have forgotten his diffidence then and there and, as the poet has it, have eased his bosom of much perilous stuff.

But conscience would not allow Mamie to reveal the secret. Already she was suffering the pangs of remorse for having, in however good a cause, broken her idol's rest with a push that might have given the poor lamb a headache. She could not confess the crime even to Steve.

And if Steve had had the pluck to tell Mamie that he loved her, as he stood before her dripping with the water which he had suffered in silence rather than betray her, she would have fallen into his arms. For Steve at that moment had all the glamour for her of the self-sacrificing hero of a moving-picture film. He had not actually risked death for her, perhaps, but he had taken a sudden cold shower-bath without a murmur—all for her.

Mamie was thrilled. She looked at him with the gleaming eyes of devotion.

"THAT IS THE COLD SHOWER. THIS IS THE HOT. I WILL TURN ON BOTH"

But Steve, just because he knew that he was wet and fancied that he must look ridiculous, held his peace.

And presently, his secret still locked in his bosom, and his collar sticking limply to his neck, he crept down-stairs, avoiding the society of his fellow man, and slunk out into the night where, if there was no Mamie, there were, at any rate, dry clothes.

CHAPTER IV

THE WIDENING GAP

The new life hit Kirk as a wave hits a bather; and, like a wave, swept him off his feet, choked him, and generally filled him with a feeling of acute discomfort.

He should have been prepared for it, but he was not. He should have divined from the first that the money was bound to produce changes other than a mere shifting of headquarters from Sixty-First Street to Fifth Avenue. But he had deluded himself at first with the idea that Ruth was different from other women, that she was superior to the artificial pleasures of the Society which is distinguished by the big S.

In a moment of weakness, induced by hair-ruffling, he had given in on the point of the hygienic upbringing of William Bannister; but there, he had imagined, his troubles were to cease. He had supposed that he was about to resume the old hermit's-cell life of the studio and live in a world which contained only Ruth, Bill, and himself.

He was quickly undeceived. Within two days he was made aware of the fact that Ruth was in the very center of the social whirlpool and that she took it for granted that he would join her there. There was nothing of the hermit about Ruth now. She was amazingly undomestic.

Her old distaste for the fashionable life of New York seemed to have vanished absolutely. As far as Kirk could see, she was always entertaining or being entertained. He was pitched headlong into a world where people talked incessantly of things which bored him and did things which seemed to him simply mad. And Ruth, whom he had thought he understood, reveled in it all.

At first he tried to get at her point of view, to discover what she found to enjoy in this lunatic existence of aimlessness and futility. One night, as they were driving home from a dinner which had bored him unspeakably, he asked the question point-blank. It seemed to him incredible that she could take pleasure in an entertainment which had filled him with such depression.

" Ruth," he said impulsively, as the car moved off, " what do you see in this sort of thing? How can you stand these people? What have you in common with them?"

" Poor old Kirk, I know you hated it to-night. But we sha'n't be dining with the Baileys every night."

Bailey Bannister had been their host on that occasion, and the dinner had been elaborate and gorgeous. Mrs. Bailey was now one of the leaders of the younger set. Bailey, looking much more than a year older than when Kirk had seen him last, had presided at the head of the table with great dignity, and the meeting with him had not contributed to the pleasure of Kirk's evening.

" Were you awfully bored? You seemed to be getting along quite well with Sybil."

" I like her. She's good fun."

" She's certainly having good fun. I'd give anything to know what Bailey really thinks of it. She is the most shockingly extravagant little creature in New York. You know the Wilburs were quite poor, and poor Sybil was kept very short. I think that marrying Bailey and having all this money to play with has turned her head."

It struck Kirk that the criticism applied equally well to the critic.

" She does the most absurd things. She gave a freak dinner when you were away that cost I don't know how much. She is always doing something. Well, I suppose Bailey knows what he's about; but at her present pace she must be keeping him busy making money to pay for all her fads. You ought to paint a picture of Bailey, Kirk, as the typical patient American husband. You couldn't get a better model."

" Suggest it to him, and let me hide somewhere when I can hear what he says. Bailey has his own opinion of my pictures."

Ruth laughed a little nervously. She had always wondered exactly what had taken place that day in the studio, and the subject was one which she was shy of exhuming. She turned the conversation.

" What did you ask me just now? Something about—"

" I asked you what you had in common with these people."

Ruth reflected.

" Oh, well, it's rather difficult to say if you put it like that. They're just people, you know. They are amusing sometimes. I used to know most of them. I suppose that is the chief thing which brings us together. They happen to be there, and if you're traveling on a road you naturally talk to your fellow travelers. But why? Don't you like them? Which of them didn't you like?"

It was Kirk's turn to reflect.

" Well, that's hard to answer, too. I don't think I actively liked or disliked any of them. They seemed to me just not worth while. My point is, rather, why are we wasting a perfectly good evening mixing with them? What's the use? That's my case in a nutshell."

"If you put it like that, what's the use of anything? One must do something. We can't be hermits."

A curious feeling of being infinitely remote from Ruth came over Kirk. She dismissed his dream as a whimsical impossibility not worthy of serious consideration. Why could they not be hermits? They had been hermits before, and it had been the happiest period of both their lives. Why, just because an old man had died and left them money, must they rule out the best thing in life as impossible and plunge into a nightmare which was not life at all?

He had tried to deceive himself, but he could do so no longer. Ruth had changed. The curse with which his sensitive imagination had invested John Bannister's legacy was, after all, no imaginary curse. Like a golden wedge, it had forced Ruth and himself apart.

Everything had changed. He was no longer the center of Ruth's life. He was just an encumbrance, a nuisance who could not be got rid of and must remain a permanent handicap, always in the way.

So thought Kirk morbidly as the automobile passed through the silent streets. It must be remembered that he had been extremely bored for a solid three hours, and was predisposed, consequently, to gloomy thoughts.

Whatever his faults, Kirk rarely whined. He had never felt so miserable in his life, but he tried to infuse a tone of lightness into the conversation. After all, if Ruth's intuition fell short of enabling her to understand his feelings, nothing was to be gained by parading them.

"I guess it's my fault," he said, "that I haven't got abreast of the society game as yet. You had better give me a few pointers. My trouble is that, being new to them, I can't tell whether these people are types or exceptions. Take Clarence Grayling, for instance. Are there any more at home like Clarence?"

"My dear child, *all* Bailey's special friends are like Clarence, exactly like. I remember telling him so once."

"Who was the specimen with the little black mustache who thought America crude and said that the only place to live in was southern Italy? Is he an isolated case or an epidemic?"

"He is scarcer than Clarence, but he's quite a well-marked type. He is the millionaire's son who has done Europe and doesn't mean you to forget it."

"There was a chesty person with a wave of hair coming down over his forehead. A sickeningly handsome fellow who looked like a poet. I think they called him Basil. Does he run around in flocks, or is he unique?"

Ruth did not reply for a moment. Basil Milbank was a part of the past which, in the year during which Kirk had been away, had come rather startlingly to life.

There had been a time when Basil had been very near and important to her. Indeed, but for the intervention of Mrs. Porter, described in an earlier passage, she would certainly have married Basil. Then Kirk had crossed her path and had monopolized her. During the studio period the recollection of Basil had grown faint. After that, just at the moment when Kirk was not there to lend her strength, he had come back into her life. For nearly a year she had seen him daily; and gradually—at first almost with fear—she had realized that the old fascination was by no means such a thing of the past as she had supposed.

She had hoped for Kirk's return as a general, sorely pressed, hopes for reenforcements. With Kirk at her side she felt Basil would slip back into his proper place in the scheme of things. And, behold! Kirk had returned, and still the tension remained unrelaxed.

For Kirk had changed. After the first day she could not conceal it from herself. That it was she who had changed did not present itself to her as a possible explanation of the fact that she now felt out of touch with her husband. All she knew was that they had been linked together by bonds of sympathy, and were so no longer.

She found Kirk dull. She hated to admit it, but the truth forced itself upon her. He had begun to bore her.

She collected her thoughts and answered his question.

"Basil Milbank? Oh, I should call him unique."

She felt a wild impulse to warn him, to explain the real significance of this man whom he classed contemptuously with Clarence Grayling and that absurd little Dana Ferris as somebody of no account. She wanted to cry out to him that she was in danger and that only he could help her. But she could not speak, and Kirk went on in the same tone of half-tolerant contempt:

"Who is he?"

She controlled herself with an effort, and answered indifferently.

"Oh, Basil? Well, you might say he's everything. He plays polo, leads cotillions, yachts, shoots, plays the piano wonderfully—everything. People usually like him very much." She paused. "Women especially."

She had tried to put something into her tone which might serve to awaken him, something which might prepare the way for what she wanted to say—and what, if she did not say it now—when the mood was on her, she could never say. But Kirk was deaf.

"He looks that sort of man," he said.

And, as he said it, the accumulated boredom of the past three hours found vent in a vast yawn.

Ruth set her teeth. She felt as if she had received a blow.

When she spoke again it was on the subject of street-paving defects in New York City.

It was true, as Ruth had said, that they did not dine with the Baileys every night, but that seemed to Kirk, as the days went on, the one and only bright spot in the new state of affairs. He could not bring himself to treat life with a philosophic resignation. His was not open revolt. He was outwardly docile, but inwardly he rebelled furiously.

Perhaps the unnaturally secluded life which he had led since his marriage had unfitted him for mixing in society even more than nature had done. He had grown out of the habit of mixing. Crowds irritated him. He hated doing the same thing at the same time as a hundred other people.

Like most Bohemians, he was at his best in a small circle. He liked his friends as single spies, not in battalions. He was a man who should have had a few intimates and no acquaintances; and his present life was bounded north, south, east, and west by acquaintances. Most of the men to whom he spoke he did not even know by name.

He would seek information from Ruth as they drove home.

"Who was the pop-eyed second-story man with the bald head and the convex waistcoat who glued himself to me tonight?"

"If you mean the fine old gentleman with the slightly prominent eyes and rather thin hair, that was Brock Mason, the vice-president of consolidated groceries. You mustn't even think disrespectfully of a man as rich as that."

"He isn't what you would call a sparkling talker."

"He doesn't have to be. His time is worth a hundred dollars a minute, or a second—I forget which."

"Put me down for a nickel's worth next time."

And then they began to laugh over Ruth's suggestion that they should save up and hire Mr. Mason for an afternoon and make him keep quiet all the time; for Ruth was generally ready to join him in ridiculing their new acquaintances. She had none of that reverence for the great and the near-great which, running to seed, becomes snobbery.

It was this trait in her which kept alive, long after it might have died, the hope that her present state of mind was only a phase, and that, when she had tired of the new game, she would become the old Ruth of the studio. But, when he was honest with himself, he was forced to admit that she showed no signs of ever tiring of it.

They had drifted apart. They were out of touch with each other. It was not an uncommon state of things in the circle in which Kirk now found himself. Indeed, it seemed to him that the semidetached couple was the rule rather than the exception.

But there was small consolation in this reflection. He was not at all interested in the domestic troubles of the people he mixed with. His own hit him very hard.

Ruth had criticised little Mrs. Bailey, but there was no doubt that she herself had had her head turned quite as completely by the new life.

The first time that Kirk realized this was when he came upon an article in a Sunday paper, printed around a blurred caricature which professed to be a photograph of Mrs. Kirk Winfield, in which she was alluded to with reverence and gusto as one of society's leading hostesses. In the course of the article reference was made to no fewer than three freak dinners of varying ingenuity which she had provided for her delighted friends.

It was this that staggered Kirk. That Mrs. Bailey should indulge in this particular form of insanity was intelligible. But that Ruth should have descended to it was another thing altogether.

He did not refer to the article when he met Ruth, but he was more than ever conscious of the gap between them—the gap which was widening every day.

The experiences he had undergone during the year of his wandering had strengthened Kirk considerably, but nature is not easily expelled; and the constitutional weakness of character which had hampered him through life prevented him from making any open protest or appeal. Moreover, he could understand now her point of view, and that disarmed him.

He saw how this state of things had come about. In a sense, it was the natural state of things. Ruth had been brought up in certain surroundings. Her love for him, new and overwhelming, had enabled her to free herself temporarily from these surroundings and to become reconciled to a life for which, he told himself, she had never been intended. Fate had thrown her back into her natural sphere. And now she reveled in the old environment as an exile revels in the life of the home land from which he has been so long absent.

That was the crux of the tragedy. Ruth was at home. He was not. Ruth was among her own people. He was a stranger among strangers, a prisoner in a land where men spoke with an alien tongue.

There was nothing to be done. The gods had played one of their practical jokes, and he must join in the laugh against himself and try to pretend that he was not hurt.

CHAPTER V

THE REAL THING

Kirk sat in the nursery with his chin on his hands, staring gloomily at William Bannister. On the floor William Bannister played some game of his own invention with his box of bricks.

They were alone. It was the first time they had been alone together for two weeks. As a rule, when Kirk paid his daily visit, Lora Delane Porter was there, watchful and forbidding, prepared, on the slightest excuse, to fall upon him with rules and prohibitions. To-day she was out, and Kirk had the field to himself, for Mamie, whose duty it was to mount guard, and who had been threatened with many terrible things by Mrs. Porter if she did not stay on guard, had once more allowed her too sympathetic nature to get the better of her and had vanished.

Kirk was too dispirited to take advantage of his good fortune. He had a sense of being there on parole, of being on his honor not to touch. So he sat in his chair and looked at Bill; while Bill, crooning to himself, played decorously with bricks.

The truth had been a long time in coming home to Kirk, but it had reached him at last. Ever since his return he had clung to the belief that it was a genuine conviction of its merits that had led Ruth to support her aunt's scheme for Bill's welfare. He himself had always looked on the exaggerated precautions for the maintenance of the latter's health as ridiculous and unnecessary; but he had acquiesced in them because he thought that Ruth sincerely believed them indispensable.

After all, he had not been there when Bill so nearly died, and he could understand that the shock of that episode might have distorted the judgment even of a woman so well balanced as Ruth. He was quite ready to be loyal to her in the matter, however distasteful it might be to him.

But now he saw the truth. A succession of tiny incidents had brought light to him. Ruth might or might not be to some extent genuine in her belief in the new system, but her chief motive for giving it her support was something quite different. He had tried not to admit it to himself, but he could do so no longer. Ruth allowed Mrs. Porter to have her way because it suited her to do so; because, with Mrs. Porter on the premises, she had more leisure in which to amuse herself; because, to put it in a word, the child had begun to bore her.

Everything pointed to that. In the old days it had been her chief pleasure to be with the boy. Their walks in the park had been a daily ceremony with which nothing had been allowed to interfere. But now she always had some excuse for keeping away from him.

Her visits to the nursery, when she did go there, were brief and perfunctory. And the mischief of it was that she always presented such admirable reasons for abstain-ing from Bill's society, when it was suggested to her that she should go to him, that it was impossible to bring her out into the open and settle the matter once and for all.

Patience was one of the virtues which set off the defects in Kirk's character; but he did not feel very patient now as he sat and watched Bill playing on the floor.

"Well, Bill, old man, what do you make of it all?" he said at last.

The child looked up and fixed him with unwinking eyes. Kirk winced. They were so exactly Ruth's eyes. That wide-open expression when somebody, speaking suddenly to her, interrupted a train of thought, was one of her hundred minor charms.

Bill had reproduced it to the life. He stared for a moment; then, as if there had been some telepathy between them, said: "I want mummy."

Kirk laughed bitterly.

"You aren't the only one. I want mummy, too."

"Where is mummy?"

"I couldn't tell you exactly. At a luncheon-party somewhere."

"What's luncheon-party?"

"A sort of entertainment where everybody eats too much and talks all the time without ever saying a thing that's worth hearing."

Bill considered this gravely.

"Why?"

"Because they like it, I suppose."

"Why do they like it?"

"Goodness knows."

"Does mummy like it?"

"I suppose so."

"Does mummy eat too much?"

"She doesn't. The others do."

"Why?"

William Bannister's thirst for knowledge was at this time perhaps his most marked characteristic. No encyclopedia could have coped with it. Kirk was accustomed to do his best, cheerfully yielding up what little information on general subjects he happened to possess, but he was like Mrs. Partington sweeping back the Atlantic Ocean with her broom.

"Because they've been raised that way," he replied to the last question. "Bill, old man, when you grow up, don't you ever become one of these fellows who can't walk two blocks without stopping three times to catch up with their breath. If you get like that mutt Dana Ferris you'll break my heart. And you're heading that way, poor kid."

"What's Ferris?"

"He's a man I met at dinner the other night. When he was your age he was the richest child in America, and everybody fussed over him till he grew up into a wretched little creature with a black mustache and two chins. You ought to see him. He would make you laugh; and you don't get much to laugh at nowadays. I guess it isn't hygienic for a kid to laugh. Bill, honestly — what *do* you think of things? Don't you ever want to hurl one of those sterilized bricks of yours at a certain lady? Or has she taken all the heart out of you by this time?"

This was beyond Bill, as Kirk's monologues frequently were. He changed the subject.

"I wish I had a cat," he said, by way of starting a new topic.

"Well, why haven't you a cat? Why haven't you a dozen cats if you want them?"

"I asked Aunty Lora could I have a cat and she said: 'Certainly not. Cats are—cats are—'"

"Unhygienic?"

"What's that?"

"It's what your Aunt Lora might think a cat was. Or did she say pestilential?"

"I don't amember."

"But she wouldn't let you have one?"

"Mamie said a cat might scratch me."

"Well, you wouldn't mind that?" said Kirk anxiously.

He had come to be almost morbidly on the lookout for evidence which might go to prove that this cotton-wool existence was stealing from the child the birthright of courage which was his from both his parents. Much often depends on little things, and, if Bill had replied in the affirmative to the question, it would probably have had the result of sending Kirk there and then raging through the house conducting a sort of War of Independence.

The only thing that had kept him from doing so before was the reflection that Mrs. Porter's system could not be definitely taxed with any harmful results. But his mind was never easy. Every day found him still nervously on the alert for symptoms.

Bill soothed him now by answering "No" in a very decided voice. All well so far, but it had been an anxious moment.

It seemed incredible to Kirk that the life he was leading should not in time turn the child into a whimpering bundle of nerves. His conversations with Bill were, as a result, a sort of spiritual parallel to the daily taking of his temperature with the thermometer. Sooner or later he always led the talk round to some point where Bill must make a definite pronouncement which would show whether or not the insidious decay had begun to set in.

So far all appeared to be well. In earlier conversations Bill, subtly questioned, had stoutly maintained that he was not afraid of Indians, dogs, pirates, mice, cows, June-bugs, or noises in the dark. He had even gone so far as to state that if an Indian chief found his way into the nursery he, Bill, would chop his head off. The most exacting father could not have asked more. And yet Kirk was not satisfied; he remained uneasy.

It so happened that this afternoon Bill, who had had hitherto to maintain his reputation for intrepidity entirely by verbal statements, was afforded an opportunity of providing a practical demonstration that his heart was in the right place. The game he was playing with the bricks was one that involved a certain amount of running about with a puffing accompaniment of a vaguely equine nature. And while performing this part of the program he chanced to trip. He hesitated for a moment, as if uncertain whether to fall or remain standing; then did the former with a most emphatic bump.

He scrambled up, stood looking at Kirk with a twitching lip, then gave a great gulp, and resumed his trotting. The whole exhibition of indomitable heroism was over in half a minute, and he did not even bother to wait for applause.

The effect of the incident on Kirk was magical. He was in the position of an earnest worshiper who, tortured with doubts, has prayed for a sign. This was a revelation. A million anti-Indian statements, however resolute, were nothing to this.

This was the real thing. Before his eyes this superchild of his had fallen in a manner which might quite reasonably have led to tears; which would, Kirk felt sure, have produced bellows of anguish from every other child in America. And what had happened? Not a moan. No, sir, not one solitary cry. Just a gulp which you had to strain your ears to hear, and which, at that, might have been a mere taking-in of breath such as every athlete must do, and all was over.

This child of his was the real thing. It had been proved beyond possibility of criticism.

There are moments when a man on parole forgets his promise. All thought of rules and prohibitions went from Kirk. He rose from his seat, grabbed his son with both hands, and hugged him. We cannot even begin to estimate the number of bacilli which must have rushed, whooping with joy, onto the unfortunate child. Under a microscope it would probably have looked like an Old Home Week. And Kirk did not care. He simply kept on hugging. That was the sort of man he was—thoroughly heartless.

"Bill, you're great!" he cried.

Bill had been an amazed party to the incident. Nothing of this kind had happened to him for so long that he had forgotten there were children to whom this sort of thing did happen. Then he recollected a similar encounter with a bearded man down in the hall when he came in one morning from his ride in the automobile. A moment later he had connected his facts.

This man who had no beard was the same man as the man who had a beard, and this behavior was a personal eccentricity of his. The thought crossed his mind that Aunty Lora would not approve of this.

And then, surprisingly, there came the thought that he did not care whether Aunty Lora approved or not. *He* liked it, and that was enough for him.

The seeds of revolt had been sown in the bosom of William Bannister.

It happened that Ruth, returning from her luncheon-party, looked in at the nursery on her way up-stairs. She was confronted with the spectacle of Bill seated on Kirk's lap, his face against Kirk's shoulder. Kirk, though he had stopped speaking as the door opened, appeared to be in the middle of a story, for Bill, after a brief glance at the newcomer, asked: "What happened then?"

"Kirk, really!" said Ruth.

Kirk did not appear in the least ashamed of himself.

"Ruth, this kid is the most amazing

kid. Do you know what happened just now? He was running along and he tripped and came down flat. And he didn't even think of crying. He just picked himself up, and—"

"That was very brave of you, Billy. But, seriously, Kirk, you shouldn't hug him like that. Think what Aunt Lora would say!"

"Aunt Lora be— Bother Aunt Lora!"

"Well, I won't give you away. If she heard, she would write a book about it. And she was just starting to come up when I was down-stairs. We came in together. You had better fly while there's time."

It was sound advice, and Kirk took it.

It was not till some time later that, going over the incident again in his mind, he realized how very lightly Ruth had treated what, if she really adhered to Mrs. Porter's views on hygiene, should have been to her a dreadful discovery. The reflection was pleasant to him for a moment; it seemed to draw Ruth and himself closer together; then he saw the reverse side of it.

If Ruth did not really believe in this absurd hygienic nonsense, why had she permitted it to be practised upon the boy? There was only one answer, and it was the one which Kirk had already guessed at. She did it because it gave her more freedom, because it bored her to look after the child herself, because she was not the same Ruth he had left at the studio when he started with Hank Jardine for Colombia.

CHAPTER VI

THE OUTCASTS

Three months of his new life had gone by before Kirk awoke from the stupor which had gripped him as the result of the general upheaval of his world. Ever since his return from Colombia he had honestly been intending to resume his painting, and, attacking it this time in a businesslike way, to try to mold himself into the semblance of an efficient artist.

His mind had been full of fine resolutions. He would engage a good teacher, some competent artist whom fortune had not treated well and who would be glad of the job—Washington Square and its neighborhood were full of them — and settle down grimly, working regular hours, to recover lost ground.

But the rush of life, as lived on the upper avenue, had swept him away. He had been carried along on the rapids of dinners, parties, dances, theaters, luncheons, and the rest, and his great resolve had gone bobbing away from him on the current.

He had recovered it now and climbed painfully ashore, feeling bruised and exhausted, but determined.

Among the motley crowd which had made the studio a home in the days of Kirk's bachelorhood had been an artist—one might almost say an ex-artist—named Robert Dwight Penway. An overfondness for rye whisky at the Brevoort café had handicapped Robert as an active force in the world of New York art. As a practical worker he was not greatly esteemed—least of all by the editors of magazines, who had paid advance checks to him for work which, when delivered at all, was delivered too late for publication. These, once bitten, were now twice shy of Mr. Penway. They did not deny his great talents, which were, indeed, indisputable; but they were fixed in their determination not to make use of them.

Fate could have provided no more suitable ally for Kirk. It was universally admitted around Washington Square and—grudgingly—down-town that in the matter of theory Mr. Penway excelled. He could teach to perfection what he was too erratic to practise.

Robert Dwight Penway, run to earth one sultry evening in the Brevoort, welcomed Kirk as a brother, as a rich brother. Even when his first impression, that he was to have the run of the house on Fifth Avenue and mix freely with touchable multimillionaires, had been corrected, his attitude was still brotherly. He parted from Kirk with many solemn promises to present himself at the studio daily and teach him enough art to put him clear at the top of the profession. "'Way above all these other dubs," asserted Mr. Penway.

Robert Dwight Penway's attitude toward his contemporaries in art bore a striking resemblance to Steve's estimate of his successors in the middle-weight department of the American prize-ring.

Surprisingly to those who knew him, Mr. Penway was as good as his word. Certainly Kirk's terms had been extremely generous; but he had thrown away many a contract of equal value in his palmy days. Possibly his activity was due to his liking for Kirk; or it may have been that the prospect of sitting by with a cigar while somebody else worked, with nothing to do all day except offer criticism and advice, appealed to him.

At any rate, he appeared at the studio on the following afternoon, completely sober and excessively critical. He examined the canvases which Kirk had hauled from shelves and corners for his inspection. One after another he gazed upon them in an increasingly significant silence. When the last one was laid aside he delivered judgment.

"Golly!" he said.

Kirk flushed. It was not that he was not in complete agreement with the verdict. Looking at these paintings, some of which he had in the old days thought extremely good, he was forced to admit that "Golly" was the only possible criticism. He had not seen them for a long time, and absence had enabled him to correct first impressions. Moreover, something had happened to him, causing him to detect flaws where he had seen only merits. Life had sharpened his powers of judgment. He was a grown man looking at the follies of his youth.

"Burn them!" said Mr. Penway, lighting a cigar with the air of one restoring his tissues after a strenuous ordeal. "Burn the lot. They're awful. Darned amateur nightmares. They offend the eye. Cast them into a burning fiery furnace."

Kirk nodded. The criticism was just. It erred, if at all, on the side of mildness. Certainly something had happened to him since he perpetrated those daubs. He had developed. He saw things with new eyes.

"I guess I had better start right in again at the beginning," he said.

"Earlier than that," amended Mr. Penway.

So Kirk settled down to a routine of hard work; and, so doing, drove another blow at the wedge which was separating his life from Ruth's. There were days now when they did not meet at all, and others when they saw each other for a few short moments in which neither seemed to have much to say.

Ruth had made a perfunctory protest against the new departure.

"Really," she said, "it does seem absurd for you to spend all your time down at that old studio. It isn't as if you had to. But, of course, if you want to—"

And she had gone on to speak of other subjects. It was plain to Kirk that his absence scarcely affected her. She was still in the rapids, and every day carried her farther away from him.

It did not hurt him now. A sort of apathy seemed to have fallen on him. The old days became more and more remote. Sometimes he doubted whether anything remained of her former love for him, and sometimes he wondered if he still loved her. She was so different that it was almost as if she were a stranger. Once they had had everything in common. Now it seemed to him that they had nothing—not even Bill.

He did not brood upon it. He gave himself no time for that. He worked doggedly on under the blasphemous but efficient guidance of Mr. Penway. He was becoming a man with a fixed idea—the idea of making good.

He began to make headway. His beginnings were small, but practical. He no longer sat down when the spirit moved him to dash off vague masterpieces which might turn into something quite unexpected on the road to completion; he snatched at anything definite that presented itself.

Sometimes it was a couple of illustrations to a short story in one of the minor magazines, sometimes a picture to go with a eulogy of a patent medicine. Whatever it was, he seized upon it and put into it all the talent he possessed. And, thanks to the indefatigable coaching of Robert Dwight Penway, a certain merit was beginning to creep into his work. His drawing was growing firmer. He no longer shirked difficulties.

Mr. Penway was good enough to approve of his progress. Being free from any morbid distaste for himself, he attributed that progress to its proper source. As he said once in a moment of expansive candor, he could, given a free hand and something to drink and smoke while doing it, make an artist out of two sticks and a lump of coal.

"Why, I've made *you* turn out things that are like something on earth, my boy," he said proudly. "And that," he added, as he reached out for the bottle of Bourbon which Kirk had provided for him, "is going some."

Kirk was far too grateful to resent the slightly unflattering note a more spirited man might have detected in the remark.

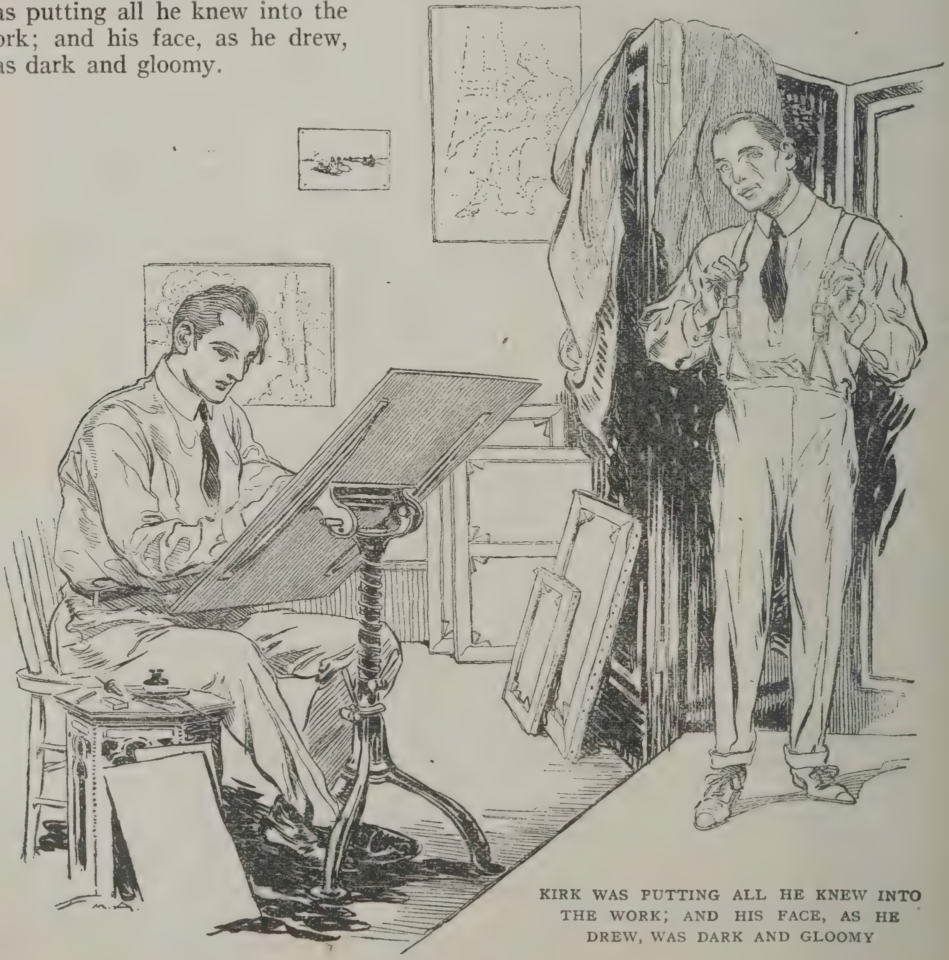
Only once during those days did Kirk allow himself to weaken and admit to himself how wretched he was. He was drawing a picture of Steve at the time, and Steve had the sympathy which encourages weakness in others.

It was a significant sign of his changed attitude toward his profession that he was not drawing Steve as a figure in an allegorical picture or as "Apollo" or "The Toiler," but simply as a well-developed young man who had had the good sense to support his nether garments with Middleton's Undeniable Suspenders. The picture, when completed, would show Steve smirking down at the region of his waist-line and announcing with pride and satisfaction: "They're Middleton's!" Kirk was putting all he knew into the work; and his face, as he drew, was dark and gloomy.

Steve noted this with concern. He had perceived for some time that Kirk had changed. He had lost all his old boyish enjoyment of their sparring-bouts, and he threw the medicine-ball with an absent gloom almost equal to Bailey's.

It had not occurred to Steve to question Kirk about this. If Kirk had anything on his mind which he wished to impart he would say it. Meanwhile, the friendly thing for him to do was to be quiet and pretend to notice nothing.

It seemed to Steve that nothing was going right these days. Here was he, chafing at his inability to open his heart to Mamie. Here was Kirk, obviously in trouble. And —a smaller thing, but of interest, as showing how universal the present depression was—there was Bailey Bannister, equally obviously much worried over something or other.



KIRK WAS PUTTING ALL HE KNEW INTO THE WORK; AND HIS FACE, AS HE DREW, WAS DARK AND GLOOMY

For Bailey had reinstated Steve in the place he had occupied before old John Bannister had dismissed him, and for some time past Steve had marked him down as a man with a secret trouble. He had never been of a riotously cheerful disposition, but it had been possible once to draw him into conversation at the close of the morning's exercises. Now he hardly spoke. And often, when Steve arrived in the morning, he was informed that Mr. Bannister had started for Wall Street early on important business.

These things troubled Steve. His simple soul abhorred a mystery.

But it was the case of Kirk that worried him most, for he half guessed that the latter's gloom had to do with Ruth; and he worshiped Ruth.

Kirk laid down his sketch and got up.

"I guess that'll do for the moment, Steve," he said.

Steve relaxed the attitude of proud satisfaction which he had assumed in order to do justice to the Undeniable Suspenders. He stretched himself and sat down.

"You certainly are working to beat the band just now, squire," he remarked.

"It's a pretty good thing, work, Steve," said Kirk. "If it does nothing else, it keeps you from thinking."

He knew it was feeble of him, but he was powerfully impelled to relieve himself by confiding his wretchedness to Steve. He need not say much, he told himself plausibly—only just enough to lighten the burden a little.

He would not be disloyal to Ruth—he had not sunk to that—but, after all, Steve was Steve. It was not like blurting out his troubles to a stranger. It would harm nobody, and do him a great deal of good, if he talked to Steve.

He relit his pipe, which had gone out during a tense spell of work on the suspenders.

"Well, Steve," he said, "what do *you* think of life? How is this best of all possible worlds treating you?"

Steve deposed that life was pretty punk.

"You're a great describer, Steve. You've hit it first time. Punk is the word. It's funny, if you look at it properly. Take my own case. The superficial observer, who is apt to be a bonehead, would say that I ought to be singing psalms of joy. I am married to the woman I wanted to marry. I have a son who, not to be fulsome, is a perfectly good sort of son. I have no financial troubles. I eat well. I sleep well. I have ceased to tremble when I see a job of work. In fact, I have advanced in my art to such an extent that shrewd business men like Middleton put the pictorial side of their Undeniable Suspenders in my hands and go off to play golf with their minds easy, having perfect confidence in my skill and judgment. If I can't be merry and bright, who can? Do you find me merry and bright, Steve?"

"I've seen you in better shape," said Steve cautiously.

"I've felt in better shape."

Steve coughed. The conversation was about to become delicate.

"What's eating you, colonel?" he asked presently.

Kirk frowned in silence at the Undeniable for a few moments. Then the pent-up misery of months exploded in a cascade of words. He jumped up and began to walk restlessly about the studio.

"Damn it! Steve, I ought not to say a word, I know. It's weak and cowardly and bad taste and everything else you can think of to speak of it—even to you. One's supposed to stand this sort of roasting at the stake with a grin, as if one enjoyed it. But, after all, you *are* different. It's not as if it was any one. You *are* different, aren't you?"

"Sure."

"Well, you know what's wrong as well as I do."

"Surest thing you know. It's hit me, too."

"How's that?"

"Well, things ain't the same. That's about what it comes to."

Kirk stopped and looked at him. His expression was wistful.

"I ought not to be talking about it."

"You go right ahead, squire," said Steve soothingly. "I know just how you feel, and I guess talking's not going to do any one any harm. Act as if I wasn't here. Look on it as a monologue. I don't amount to anything."

"When did you go to the house last, Steve?"

Steve reflected.

"About a couple of weeks ago, I reckon."

"See the kid?"

Steve shook his head.

"Seeing his nibs ain't my long suit these days. I may be wrong, but I got the idea there was a dead-line for me about three blocks away from the nursery. I asked Keggs was the coast clear, but he said the Porter dame was in the ring, so I kind of thought I'd be better away. I don't seem to fit in with all them white tiles and thermometers."

"You used to see him every day when we were here. And you didn't seem to contaminate him, as far as any one could notice."

There was a silence.

"Do you see him often, colonel?"

Kirk laughed.

"Oh, yes. I'm favored. I pay a state visit every day. Think of that! I sit in a chair at the other end of the room while Mrs. Porter stands between to see that I don't start anything. Bill plays with his sterilized bricks. Occasionally he and I exchange a few civil words. It's as jolly and sociable as you could want. We have great times."

"Say, on the level, I wonder you stand for it."

"I've got to stand for it."

"He's your kid."

"Not exclusively. I have a partner, Steve."

Steve snorted dolefully.

"Ain't it hell the way things break loose in this world!" he sighed. "Who'd have thought two years ago—"

"Do you make it only two? I should have put it at about two thousand."

"Honest, squire, if any one had told me then that Miss Ruth had it in her to take up with all these fool stunts—"

"Well, I can't say *I* was prepared for it."

Steve coughed again. Kirk was in an expansive mood this afternoon, and the occasion was ideal for the putting forward of certain views which he had long wished to impart. But, on the other hand, the subject was a peculiarly delicate one. It has been well said that it is better for a third party to quarrel with a buzz-saw than to interfere between husband and wife; and Steve was constitutionally averse to anything that savored of butting in.

Still, Kirk had turned the talk into this channel. He decided to risk it.

"If I were you," he said, "I'd get busy and start something."

"Such as what?"

Steve decided to abandon caution and speak his mind. Him, almost as much as Kirk, the existing state of things had driven to desperation. Though in a sense he was only a spectator, the fact that the altered conditions of Kirk's life involved his almost complete separation from Mamie gave him what might be called a stake in the affair. The brief and rare glimpses which he got of her nowadays made it absolutely impossible for him to conduct his wooing on a businesslike basis. A diffident man cannot possibly achieve any success in odd moments. Constant propinquity is his only hope.

That fact alone, he considered, almost gave him the right to interfere. And, apart from that, his affection for Kirk and Ruth gave him a claim. Finally, he held what was practically an official position in the family councils on the strength of being William Bannister Winfield's godfather.

He loved William Bannister as a son, and it had been one of his favorite day-dreams to conjure up a vision of the time when he should be permitted to undertake the child's physical training. He had toyed lovingly with the idea of imparting to this promising pupil all that he knew of the greatest game on earth. He had watched him in the old days staggering about the studio, and had pictured him grown to his full strength, his muscles trained, his brain full of the wisdom of one who, if his mother had not kicked, would have been middle-weight champion of America.

He had resigned himself to the fact that the infant's social status made it impossible that he should be the real White Hope whom he had once pictured beating all comers in the roped ring; but, after all, there was a certain mild fame to be acquired even by an amateur. And now that dream was over—unless Kirk could be goaded into strong action in time.

"Why don't you sneak the kid away somewhere?" he suggested. "Why don't you go right in at them and say: 'It's my kid, and I'm going to take him away into the country out of all this white-tile stuff and let him roll in the mud same as he used to.' Why, say, there's that shack of yours in Connecticut, just made for it. That kid would have the time of his life there."

"You think that's the solution, do you, Steve?"

"I'm dead sure it is." Steve's voice became more and more enthusiastic as the idea unfolded itself. "Why, it ain't only the kid I'm thinking of. There's Miss Ruth. Say, you don't mind me pulling this line of talk?"

"Go ahead. I began it. What about Miss Ruth?"

"Well, you know just what's the matter with her. She's let this society game run away with her. I guess she started it because she felt lonesome when you were away; and now it's got her and she can't drop it. All she wants is a jolt. It would slow her up and show her just where she was. She's asking for it. One good, snappy jolt would put the whole thing right. And this thing of jerking the kid away to Connecticut would be the right dope, believe *me*."

Kirk shook his head.

"It wouldn't do, Steve. It isn't that I don't want to do it; but one must play to the rules. I can't explain what I mean. I can only say it's impossible. Let's think of a parallel case. When you were in the ring, there must have been times when you had a chance of hitting your man low. Why didn't you do it? It would have jolted him, all right."

"Why, I'd have lost on a foul."

"Well, so should I lose on a foul if I started the sort of rough-house you suggest."

"I don't get you."

"Well, if you want it in plain English, Ruth would never forgive me. Is that clear enough?"

"You're dead wrong, boss," said Steve excitedly. "I know her."

"I thought I did. Well, anyway, Steve, thanks for the suggestion; but, believe me, nothing doing. And now, if you feel like it, I wish you would resume your celebrated imitation of a man exulting over the fact that he is wearing Middleton's Undeniable. There isn't much more to do, and I should like to get through with it to-day, if possible. There, hold that pose. It's exactly right. The honest man gloating over his suspenders. You ought to go on the stage, Steve."

CHAPTER VII

CUTTING THE TANGLED KNOT

THERE are some men whose mission in life it appears to be to go about the world creating crises in the lives of other people. When there is thunder in the air they precipitate the thunderbolt.

Bailey Bannister was one of these. He meant extraordinarily well, but he was a dangerous man for that very reason, and in a properly constituted world would have been segregated or kept under supervision. He would not leave the tangled lives of those around him to adjust themselves. He blundered in and tried to help. He nearly always produced a definite result, but seldom the one at which he aimed.

That he should have interfered in the affairs of Ruth and Kirk at this time was, it must be admitted, unselfish of him, for just now he was having troubles of his own on a somewhat extensive scale. His wife's extravagance was putting a strain on his finances, and he was faced with the choice of checking her or increasing his income. Being very much in love, he shrank from the former task and adopted the other way out of the difficulty.

It was this that had led to the change in his manner noticed by Steve. In order to make more money he had had to take risks, and only recently had he begun to perceive how extremely risky these risks were. For the first time in its history the firm of Bannister was making first-hand acquaintance with frenzied finance.

It is, perhaps, a little unfair to lay the blame for this entirely at the door of Bailey's Sybil. Her extravagance was largely responsible; but Bailey's newly found freedom was also a factor in the developments of the firm's operations. If you keep a dog, a dog with a high sense of his abilities and importance, tied up and muzzled for a length of time and then abruptly set it free the chances are that it will celebrate its freedom. This had happened in the case of Bailey.

Just as her father's money had caused Ruth to plunge into a whirl of pleasures which she did not really enjoy, merely for the novelty of it, so the death of John Bannister and his own consequent accession to the throne had upset Bailey's balance and embarked him on an orgy of speculation quite foreign to his true nature. All their lives Ruth and Bailey had been repressed by their father, and his removal had unsteadied them.

Bailey, on whom the shadow of the dead man had pressed particularly severely, had been quite intoxicated by sudden freedom.

He had been a cipher in the firm of Bannister & Son. In the firm of Bannister & Co. he was an untrammeled despot. He did that which was right in his own eyes, and there was no one to say him nay.

It was true that veteran members of the firm, looking in the glass, found white hairs where no white hairs had been and wrinkles on foreheads which, under the solid rule of old John Bannister, had been smooth; but it would have taken more than these straws to convince Bailey that the wind which was blowing was an ill wind. He had developed in a day the sublime self-confidence of a young Napoleon. He was all dash and enterprise—the hurricane fighter of Wall Street.

With these private interests to occupy him, it is surprising that he should have found time to take the affairs of Ruth and Kirk in hand. But he did.

For some time he had watched the widening gulf between them with pained solicitude. He disliked Kirk personally; but that did not influence him. He conceived it to be his duty to suppress private prejudices. Duty seemed to call him to go to Kirk's aid and smooth out his domestic difficulties.

What urged him to this course more than anything else was Ruth's growing intimacy with Basil Milbank; for, in the period which had elapsed since the conversation recorded earlier in the story, when Kirk had first made the other's acquaintance, the gifted Basil had become a very important and menacing figure in Ruth's life.

To Ruth, as to most women, his gifts were his attraction. He danced well; he talked well; he did everything well. He appealed to a side of Ruth's nature which Kirk scarcely touched—a side which had only come into prominence in the last year.

His manner was admirable. He suggested sympathy without expressing it. He could convey to Ruth that he thought her a misunderstood and neglected wife while talking to her about the weather. He could make his own knight-errant attitude toward her perfectly plain without saying a word, merely by playing soft music to her on the piano; for he had the gift of saying more with his finger-tips than most men could have said in a long speech carefully rehearsed.

Kirk's inability to accompany Ruth into her present life had given Basil his chance. Into the gap which now lay between them he had slipped with a smooth neatness born of experience.

Bailey hated Basil. Men, as a rule, did, without knowing why. Basil's reputation was shady, without being actually bad. He was a suspect who had never been convicted. New York contained several husbands who eyed him askance, but could not verify their suspicions, and the apparent hopelessness of ever doing so made them look on Basil as a man who had carried smoothness into the realms of fine art. He was considered too gifted to be wholesome. The men of his set, being for the most part amiably stupid, resented his cleverness.

Bailey just at present was feeling strongly on the subject of Basil. He was at that stage of his married life when he would have preferred his Sybil to speak civilly to no other man than himself. And only yesterday Sybil had come to him to inform him with obvious delight that Basil Milbank had invited her to join his yacht party for a lengthy voyage.

This had stung Bailey. He was not included in the invitation. The whole affair struck him as sinister. It was true that Sybil had never shown any sign of being fascinated by Basil; but, he told himself, there was no knowing. He forbade Sybil to accept the invitation. To soothe her disappointment, he sent her off then and there to Tiffany's with a roving commission to get what she liked; for Bailey, the stern, strong man, the man who knew when to put his foot down, was no tyrant. But he would have been indignant at the suggestion that he had bribed Sybil to refuse Basil's invitation.

One of the arguments which Sybil had advanced in the brief discussion which had followed the putting down of Bailey's foot had been that Ruth had been invited and accepted, so why should not she? Bailey had not replied to this—it was at this point of the proceedings that the Tiffany motive had been introduced, but he had not forgotten it. He thought it over, and decided to call upon Ruth.

He did so.

It was unfortunate that the nervous strain of being the Napoleon of Wall Street had had the effect of increasing to a marked extent the portentousness of Bailey's always portentous manner. Ruth rebelled against it. There was an insufferable suggestion of ripe old age and fatherliness in his attitude which she found irritating in the extreme. All her life she had chafed at authority, and now, when Bailey set himself up as one possessing it, she showed the worst side of herself to him.

He struck this unfortunate note from the very beginning.

"Ruth," he said, "I wish to speak seriously to you."

Ruth looked at him with hostile eyes, but did not speak. He did not know it, poor man, but he had selected an exceedingly bad moment for his lecture. It so happened that, only half an hour before, she and Kirk had come nearer to open warfare than they had ever come.

It had come about in this way. Kirk had slept badly the night before, and, as he lay awake in the small hours, his conscience had troubled him.

Had he done all that it was in him to do to bridge the gap between Ruth and himself? That was what his conscience had wanted to know. The answer was in the negative. On the following day, just before Bailey's call, he accordingly sought Ruth out, and—rather nervously, for Ruth made him feel nervous nowadays—suggested that he and she and William Bannister should take the air in each other's company and go and feed the squirrels in the park.

Ruth declined. It is possible that she declined somewhat curtly. The day was close and oppressive, and she had a headache and a general feeling of ill-will toward her species. Also, in her heart, she considered that the scheme proposed smacked too much of Sunday afternoon domesticity in Brooklyn. The idea of papa, mama, and baby sporting together in a public park offended her sense of the social proprieties.

She did not reveal these thoughts to Kirk because she was more than a little ashamed of them. A year ago, she knew, she would not have objected to the idea. A year ago such an expedition would have been a daily occurrence with her. Now she felt if William Bannister wished to feed squirrels, Mamie was his proper companion.

She could not put all this baldly to Kirk, so she placed the burden of her refusal on the adequate shoulders of Lora Delane Porter. Aunt Lora, she said, would never hear of William Bannister wandering at large in such an unhygienic fashion. Upon which Kirk, whose patience was not so robust as it had been, and who, like Ruth, found the day oppressive and making for irritability, had cursed Aunt Lora heartily, given it as his opinion that between them she and Ruth were turning the child from a human being into a sort of spineless, effeminate exhibit in a museum, and had taken himself off to the studio muttering disjointed things.

Ruth was still quivering with the indignation of a woman who has been cheated of the last word when Bailey appeared and announced that he wished to speak seriously to her.

Bailey saw the hostility in her eyes and winced a little before it. He was not feeling altogether at his ease. He had had experience of Ruth in this mood, and she had taught him to respect it.

But he was not going to shirk his duty. He resumed:

"I am only speaking for your own good," he said. "I know that it is nothing but thoughtlessness on your part, but I am naturally anxious—"

"Bailey," interrupted Ruth, "get to the point."

Bailey drew a long breath.

"Well, then," he said, balked of his preamble, and rushing on his fate, "I think you see too much of Basil Milbank."

Ruth raised her eyebrows.

"Oh?"

The mildness of her tone deceived Bailey.

"I do not like to speak of these things," he went on more happily; "but I feel that I must. It is my duty. Basil Milbank has not a good reputation. He is not the sort of man who—ah—who—in fact, he has not a good reputation."

"Oh?"

"I understand that he has invited you to form one of his yacht party."

"How did you know?"

"Sybil told me. He invited her. I refused to allow her to accept the invitation."

"And what did Sybil say?"

"She was naturally a little disappointed, of course, but she did as I requested."

"I wonder she didn't pack her things and go straight off."

"My dear Ruth!"

"That is what I should have done."

"You don't know what you are saying."

"Oh? Do you think I should let Kirk dictate to me like that?"

"He is certain to disapprove of your going when he hears of the invitation. What will you do?"

Ruth's eyes opened. For a moment she looked almost ugly.

"What shall I do? Why, go, of course."

She clenched her teeth. A woman's mind can work curiously, and she was associating Kirk with Bailey in what she considered an unwarrantable intrusion into her private affairs. It was as if Kirk, and not Bailey, were standing there, demanding that she should not associate with Basil Milbank.

"I shall make it my business," said Bailey, "to warn Kirk that this man is not a desirable companion for you."

The discussion of this miserable yacht affair had brought back to Bailey all the jealousy which he had felt when Sybil had first told him of it. All the vague stories he had ever heard about Basil were surging in his mind like waves of some corrosive acid. He had become a leading member of the extreme wing of the anti-Milbank party. He regarded Basil with the aversion which a dignified pigeon might feel for a circling hawk; and he was now looking on this yacht party as a deadly peril from which Ruth must be saved at any cost.

"I shall speak to him very strongly," he added.

Ruth's suppressed anger blazed up in the sudden way which before now had disconcerted her brother.

"Bailey, what do you mean by coming here and saying this sort of thing? You're becoming a perfect old woman. You spend your whole time prying into other people's affairs. I'm sorry for Sybil."

Bailey cast one reproachful look at her and left the room with pained dignity. Something seemed to tell him that no good could come to him from a prolongation of the interview. Ruth, in this mood, always had been too much for him, and always would be. Well, he had done his duty as far as he was concerned. It now remained to do the same by Kirk.

He hailed a taxi and drove to the studio.

Kirk was busy and not anxious for conversation, least of all with Bailey. He had not forgotten their last tête-à-tête.

Bailey, however, was regarding him with a feeling almost of friendliness. They were bound together by a common grievance against Basil Milbank.

"I came here, Winfield," he said, after a few moments of awkward conversation on neutral topics, "because I understand that this man Milbank has invited Ruth to join his yacht party."

"What yacht party?"

"This man Milbank is taking a party for a cruise shortly in his yacht."

"Who is Milbank?"

"Surely you have met him? Yes, he was at my house one night when you and Ruth dined there shortly after your return."

"I don't remember him. However, it doesn't matter. But why does the fact that he has asked Ruth on his yacht excite you? Are you nervous about the sea?"

"I dislike this man Milbank very much, Winfield. I think Ruth sees too much of him."

Kirk stiffened. His eyebrows rose the fraction of an inch.

"Oh?" he said.

It seemed to Bailey for an instant that he had been talking all his life to people who raised their eyebrows and said "Oh?"; but he continued manfully.

"I do not think that Ruth should know him, Winfield."

"Wouldn't Ruth be rather a good judge of that?"

His tone nettled Bailey, but the man conscious of doing his duty acquires an artificial thickness of skin, and he controlled himself. But he had lost that feeling of friendliness, of sympathy with a brother in misfortune which he had brought in with him.

"I disagree with you entirely," he said.

"Another thing," went on Kirk. "If this man Milbank—I still can't place him—is such a thug, or whatever it is that he happens to be, how did he come to be at your house the night you say I met him?"

Bailey winced. He wished the world was not perpetually reminding him that Basil and Sybil were on speaking terms.

"Sybil invited him. I may say he has asked Sybil to make one of the yacht party. I absolutely forbade it."

"But, Heavens! What's wrong with the man?"

"He has a bad reputation."

"Has he, indeed!"

"And I wish my wife to associate with him as little as possible. And I should advise you to forbid Ruth to see more of him than she can help."

Kirk laughed. The idea struck him as comic.

"My good man, I don't forbid Ruth to do things."

Bailey, objecting strongly to being called any one's good man, especially Kirk's, permitted his temper to get the better of him.

"Then you should," he snapped. "I have no wish to quarrel with you. I came in here in a friendly spirit to warn you; but I must say that for a man who married a girl, as you married Ruth, in direct opposition to the wishes of her family, you take a curious view of your obligations. Ruth has always been a headstrong, impulsive girl, and it is for you to see that she is protected from herself. If you are indifferent to her welfare, then all I can say is that you should not have married her. You appear to think otherwise. Good afternoon."

He stalked out of the studio, leaving Kirk uncomfortably conscious that he had had the worst of the argument. Bailey had been officious, no doubt, and his pompous mode of expression was not soothing, but there was no doubt that he had had right on his side.

Marrying Ruth did involve obligations. He had never considered her in that light, but perhaps she was a girl who had to be protected from herself. She was certainly impulsive. Bailey had been right there, if nowhere else.

Who was this fellow Milbank who had sprung suddenly from nowhere into the position of a menace? What were Ruth's feelings toward him? Kirk threw his mind back to the dinner-party at Bailey's and tried to place him.

Was it the man—yes, he had it now. It was the man with the wave of hair over his forehead, the fellow who looked like a poet. Memory came back to him with a rush. He recalled his instinctive dislike for the fellow.

So that was Milbank, was it? He got up and put away his brushes. There would be no more work for him that afternoon.

He walked slowly home. The heat of the day had grown steadily more oppressive. It was one of those airless, stifling afternoons which afflict New York in the summer. He remembered seeing something about a record in the evening paper which he had bought on his way to the studio, a whole column about heat and humidity. It certainly felt unusually warm even for New York.

It was one of those days when nerves are strained, when mole-hills become mountains, and mountains are all Everests. He had felt it when he talked with Ruth about Bill and the squirrels, and he felt it now. He was conscious of being extraordinarily irritated, not so much with any particular person as with the world in general. The very vagueness of Bailey's insinuations against Basil Milbank increased his resentment.

What a pompous ass Bailey was! What a fool he had been to give Bailey such a chance of snubbing him! What an extraordinarily futile and unpleasant world it was altogether!

He braced himself with an effort. It was this heat which was making him magnify trifles. Bailey was a fool. Probably there was nothing whatever wrong with this fellow Milbank. Probably he had some personal objection to the man, and that was all.

And yet the image of Basil which had come back to his mind was not reassuring. He had mistrusted him that night, and he mistrusted him now.

What should he do? Ruth was not Sybil. She was not the sort of woman a man could forbid to do things. It would require tact to induce her to refuse Basil's invitation.

As he reached the door an idea came to him, so simple that he wondered that it had not occurred to him before. It was, perhaps, an echo of his conversation with Steve.

He would get Ruth to come away with him to the shack in the Connecticut woods. As he dwelt on the idea the heat of the day seemed to become less oppressive and his heart leaped. How cool and pleasant it would be out there! They would take Bill with them and live the simple life again, in the country this time instead of in town. Perhaps out there, far away from this overcrowded city, he and Ruth would be able to come to an understanding and bridge over that ghastly gulf.

As for his work, he could do that as well in the woods as in New York. And, anyhow, he had earned a vacation. For days Mr. Penway had been hinting that the time had arrived for a folding of the hands.

Mr. Penway's views on New York and its record humidity were strong and crisply expressed. His idea, he told Kirk, was that some sport with a heart should loan him a couple of hundred bucks and let him beat it to the seashore before he melted.

In the drawing-room Ruth was playing the piano softly, as she had done so often at the studio. Kirk went to her and kissed her. A marked coolness in her reception of the kiss increased the feeling of nervousness which he had felt at the sight of her. It came back to him that they had parted that afternoon, for the first time, on definitely hostile terms.

He decided to ignore the fact. Something told him that Ruth had not forgotten, but it might be that cheerfulness now would blot out the resentment of past irritability.

But in his embarrassment he was more than cheerful. As Steve had been on the occasion of his visit to old John Bannister, he was breezy, breezy with an effort that was as painful to Ruth as it was to himself, breezy with a horrible musical comedy breeziness.

He could have adopted no more fatal tone with Ruth at that moment. All the afternoon she had been a complicated tangle of fretted nerves. Her quarrel with Kirk, Bailey's visit, a conscience that would not lie down and go to sleep at her orders, but insisted on running riot—all these things had unfitted her to bear up amiably under sudden, self-conscious breeziness.

And the heat of the day, charged now with the oppressiveness of long-overdue thunder, completed her mood. When Kirk came in and began to speak, the softest notes of the human voice would have jarred upon her. And Kirk, in his nervousness, was almost shouting.

His voice rang through the room, and Ruth winced away from it like a stricken thing. From out of the hell of nerves and heat and interfering brothers there materialized itself, as she sat there, a very vivid hatred of Kirk.

Kirk, meanwhile, uneasy, but little guessing at the fury behind Ruth's calm face, was expounding his great scheme, his panacea for all the ills of domestic misunderstandings and parted lives.

" Ruth, old girl."

Ruth shuddered.

" Ruth, old girl, I've had a bully good idea. It's getting too warm for anything in New York. Did you ever feel anything like it is to-day? Why shouldn't you and I pop down to the shack and camp out there for a week or so? And we would take Bill with us. Just we three, with somebody to do the cooking. It would be great. What do you say?"

What Ruth said languidly was: " It's quite impossible."

It was damping; but Kirk felt that at all costs he must refuse to be damped. He clutched at his cheerfulness and held it.

" Nonsense," he retorted. " Why is it impossible? It's a great idea."

Ruth half hid a yawn. She knew she was behaving abominably, and she was glad of it.

" It's impossible as far as I am concerned. I have a hundred things to do before I can leave New York."

" Well, I could do with a day or two to clear up a few bits of work I have on hand. Why couldn't we start this day week?"

" It is out of the question for me. About then I shall be on Mr. Milbank's yacht. He has invited me to join his party. The actual day is not settled, but it will be in about a week's time."

" Oh!" said Kirk.

Ruth said nothing.

" Have you accepted the invitation?"

" I have not actually answered his letter. I was just going to when you came in."

" But you mean to accept it?"

" Certainly. Several of my friends will be there. Sybil for one."

" Not Sybil."

" Oh, I know Bailey has made some ridiculous objection to her going, but I mean to persuade her."

Kirk did not answer. She looked at him steadily.

" So Bailey did call on you this afternoon? He told me he was going to, but I hoped he would think better of it. But apparently there are no limits to Bailey's stupidity."

" Yes, Bailey came to the studio. He seemed troubled about this yacht party."

" Did he advise you to forbid me to go?"

" Well, yes; he did."

" And now you have come to do it?"

" Not at all. I told Bailey that you were not the sort of woman one forbade to do things."

"I'm not."

There was a pause.

"All the same, I wish you wouldn't go."

Ruth did not answer.

"It would be very jolly out at the shack."

Ruth shuddered elaborately and gave a little laugh.

"Would it? It's rather a question of taste. Personally, I can't imagine anything more depressing and uncomfortable than being cooped up in a drafty frame house miles away from anywhere. There's no reason why you should not go, though, if you like that sort of thing. Of course, you must not take Bill."

"Why not?"

Kirk spoke calmly enough, but he was very near the breaking point. All his good resolutions had vanished under the acid of Ruth's manner.

"I couldn't let him rough it like that. Aunt Lora would have a fit."

Conditions being favorable, it only needs a spark to explode a powder-magazine; and there are moments when a word can turn an outwardly calm and patient man into a raging maniac. This introduction of Mrs. Porter's name into the discussion at this particular point broke down the last remnants of Kirk's self-control.

For a few seconds his fury so mastered him that he could not speak. Then, suddenly, the storm passed and he found himself cool and venomous. He looked at Ruth curiously. It seemed incredible to him that he had ever loved her.

"We had better get this settled," he said in a hard, quiet voice.

Ruth started. She had never heard him speak like this before. She had not imagined him capable of speaking in that way. Even in the days when she had loved him most she had never looked up to him. She had considered his nature weak, and she had loved his weakness. Except in the case of her father, she had always dominated the persons with whom she mixed; and she had taken it for granted that her will was stronger than Kirk's. Something in his voice now told her that she had underestimated him.

"Get what settled?" she asked, and was furious with herself because her voice shook.

"Is Mrs. Porter the mother of the child, or are you? What has Mrs. Porter to do with it? Why should I ask her permission? How does it happen to be any business of Mrs. Porter's at all?"

Ruth felt baffled. He was giving her no chance to take the offensive. There was nothing in his tone which she could openly resent. He was not shouting at her, he was speaking quietly. There was nothing for her to do but answer the question, and she knew that her answer would give him another point in the contest. Even as she spoke she knew that her words were ridiculous.

"Aunt Lora has been wonderful with him. No child could have been better looked after."

"I know she has used him as a vehicle for her particular form of insanity, but that's not the point. What I am asking is why she was introduced at all."

"I told you. When you were away, Bill nearly—"

"Died. I know. I'm not forgetting that. And naturally for a time you were frightened. It is just possible that for the moment you lost your head and honestly thought that Mrs. Porter's methods were the only chance for him. But that state of mind could not last all this time with you. You are not a crank like your aunt. You are a perfectly sensible, level-headed woman. And you must have seen the idiocy of it all long before I came back. Why did you let it go on?"

Ruth did not answer.

"I will tell you why. Because it saved you trouble. Because it gave you more leisure for the sort of futile waste of time which seems to be the only thing you care for nowadays. Don't trouble to deny it. Do you think I haven't seen in these last few months that Bill bores you to death? Oh, I know you always have some perfect excuse for keeping away from him. It's too much trouble for you to be a mother to him, so you hedge with your conscience by letting Mrs. Porter pamper him and sterilize his toys and all the rest of it, and try to make yourself think that you have done your duty to him. You know that, as far as everything goes that matters, any tenement child is better off than Bill."

"I—"

"You had better let me finish what I have got to say. I will be as brief as I can. That is my case as regards Bill. Now about myself. What do you think I am made of? I've stood it just as long as I could; you have tried me too hard. I'm through. Heaven knows why it should have come to this. It is not so very long ago that Bill was half the world to you and I was the other half. Now, apparently, there is not room in your world for either of us."

Ruth had risen. She was trembling.

"I think we had better end this."

He broke in on her words.

"End it? Yes, you're right. One way or the other. Either go back to the old life or start a new one. What we are living now is a horrible burlesque."

"What do you mean? How start a new life?"

"I mean exactly what I say. In the life you are living now I am an anachronism. I'm a survival. I'm out of date and in the way. You would be freer without me."

"That's absurd."

"Is the idea so novel? Is our marriage the only failure in New York?"

"Do you mean that we ought to separate?"

"Only a little more, a very little more, than we are separated now. Never see each other again instead of seeing each other for a few minutes every day. It's not a very big step to take."

Ruth sat down and rested her chin on her hand, staring at nothing. Kirk went to the window and looked out.

Over the park the sky was black. In the room behind him the light had faded till it seemed as if night were come. The air was heavy and stifling. A flicker of lightning came and went in the darkness over the trees.

He turned abruptly.

"It is the only reasonable thing to do. Our present mode of life is a farce. We are drifting farther apart every day. Perhaps I have changed. I know you have. We are two strangers chained together. We have made a muddle of it, and the best thing we can do is to admit it.

"I am no good to you. I have no part in your present life. You're the queen and I'm just the prince consort, the fellow who happens to be Mrs. Winfield's husband. It's not a pleasant part to have to play, and I have had enough of it. We had better separate before we hate each other. You have your amusements. I have my work. We can continue them apart. We shall both be better off."

He stopped. Ruth did not speak. She was still sitting in the same attitude. It was too dark to see her face. It formed a little splash of white in the dusk. She did not move.

Kirk went to the door.

"I'm going up to say good-by to Bill. Have you anything to say against that? And I shall say good-by to him in my own way."

She made no sign that she had heard him.

"Good-by," he said again.

The door closed.

Up in the nursery Bill crooned to himself as he played on the floor. Mamie sat in a chair, sewing. The opening of the door caused them to look up simultaneously.

"Hello," said Bill.

His voice was cordial without being enthusiastic. He was glad to see Kirk, but tin soldiers were tin soldiers and demanded concentrated attention. When you are in the middle of intricate maneuvers you cannot allow yourself to be more than momentarily distracted by anything.

"Mamie," said Kirk hoarsely, "go out for a minute, will you? I sha'n't be long."

Mamie obediently departed. Later, when Keggs was spreading the news of Kirk's departure in the servants' hall, she remembered that his manner had struck her as strange.

Kirk sat down in the chair she had left and looked at Bill. He felt choked. There was a mist before his eyes.

"Bill."

The child, absorbed in his game, did not look up.

"Bill, old man, come here a minute. I've something to say to you."

Bill looked up, nodded, moved a couple of soldiers, and got up. He came to Kirk's side. His chosen mode of progression at this time was a kind of lurch. He was accustomed to breathe heavily during the journey, and on arrival at the terminus usually shouted triumphantly.

Kirk put an arm round him. Bill stared gravely up into his face. There was a silence. From outside came a sudden rumbling crash. Bill jumped.

"Funder," he said in a voice that shook a little.

"Not afraid of thunder, are you?" said Kirk.

Bill shook his head stoutly.

"Bill."

"Yes, daddy?"

Kirk fought to keep his voice steady.

"Bill, old man, I'm afraid you won't see me again for some time. I'm going away."

"In a ship?"

"No, not in a ship."

"In a train?"

"Perhaps."

"Take me with you, daddy."

"I'm afraid I can't, Bill."

"Sha'n't I ever see you again?"

Kirk winced. How direct children are. What was it they called it in the papers? "The custody of the child." How little it said and how much it meant.

The sight of Bill's wide eyes and quivering mouth reminded him that he was not the only person involved in the tragedy of those five words. He pulled himself together. Bill was waiting anxiously for an answer to his question. There was no need to make Bill unhappy before his time.

"Of course you will," he said, trying to make his voice cheerful.

"Of course I will," echoed Bill dutifully.

Kirk could not trust himself to speak again. The old sensation of choking had come back to him. The room was a blur.

He caught Bill to him in a grip that made the child cry out, held him for a long minute, then put him gently down and made blindly for the door.

HE CAUGHT BILL TO HIM IN A GRIP THAT MADE THE CHILD CRY OUT

The storm had burst by the time Kirk found himself in the street. The thunder crashed and great spears of lightning flashed across the sky. A few heavy drops heralded the approach of the rain, and before he had reached the corner it was beating down in torrents.

He walked on, raising his face to the storm, finding in it a curious relief. A magical coolness had crept into the air, and with it a strange calm into his troubled mind. He looked back at the scene through which he had passed as at something infinitely remote. He could not realize distinctly what had happened. He was only aware that everything was over, that with a few words he had broken his life into small pieces. Too impatient to unravel the tangled knot, he had cut it, and nothing could mend it now.

" Why?"

The rain had ceased as suddenly as it had begun. The sun was struggling through a mass of thin cloud over the park. The world was full of the drip and rush of water. All that had made the day oppressive and strained nerves to breaking point had gone, leaving peace behind. Kirk felt like one waking from an evil dream.

" Why did it happen?" he asked himself. " What made me do it?"

A distant rumble of thunder answered the question.

CHAPTER VIII

STEVE TO THE RESCUE

It is an unfortunate fact that, when a powder-magazine explodes, the damage is not confined to the person who struck the match, but extends to the innocent bystanders. In the present case it was Steve Dingle who sustained the worst injuries.

Of the others who might have been affected, Mrs. Lora Delane Porter was bombproof. No explosion in her neighborhood could shake her. She received the news of Kirk's outbreak with composure. Privately, in her eugenic heart, she considered his presence superfluous now that William Bannister was safely launched upon his career.

In the drama of which she was the self-appointed stage-director, Kirk was a mere super supporting the infant star. Her great mind, occupied almost entirely by the past and the future, took little account of the present. So long as Kirk did not interfere with her management of Bill, he was at liberty, so far as she was concerned, to come or go as he pleased.

Steve could not imitate her admirable detachment. He was a poor philosopher, and all that his mind could grasp was that Kirk was in trouble and that Ruth had apparently gone mad.

The affair did not come to his ears immediately. He visited the studio at frequent intervals and found Kirk there, working hard and showing no signs of having passed through a crisis which had wrecked his life. He was quiet, it was true, but then he was apt to be quiet nowadays.

Probably, if it had not been for Keggs, he would have been kept in ignorance of what had happened for a time.

Walking one evening up Broadway, he met Keggs taking the air and observing the night-life of New York like himself.

Keggs greeted Steve with enthusiasm. He liked Steve, and it was just possible that Steve might not have heard about the great upheaval. He suggested a drink at a neighboring saloon.

" We have not seen you at our house lately, Mr. Dingle," he remarked, having pecked at his glass of beer like an old, wise bird.

He looked at Steve with a bright eye, somewhat puffy at the lids, but full of life.

" No," said Steve. " That's right. Guess I must have been busy."

Keggs uttered a senile chuckle and drank more beer.

" They're rum uns," he went on. " I've been in some queer places, but this beats 'em all."

" What do you mean?" inquired Steve, as a second chuckle escaped his companion.

" Why, it's come to an 'ead, things has, Mr. Dingle. That's what I mean. You won't have forgotten all about the pampering of that child what I told you of quite recent. Well, it's been and come to an 'ead."

" Yes? Continue, colonel. This listens good."

" You ain't 'eard?"

" Not a word."

Keggs smiled a happy smile and sipped his beer. It did the old man good, finding an entirely new audience like this.

" Why, Mr. Winfield 'as packed up and left."

Steve gasped.

" Left!" he cried. " Not *quit?* Not gone for good?"

" For his own good, I should say. Finds himself better off away from it all, if you ask me. But 'adn't you reely heard, Mr. Dingle? God bless my soul! I thought it was public property by now, that little bit of noos. Why, Mr. Winfield 'asn't been living with us for the matter of a week or more."

" For the love of Mike!"

" I'm telling you the honest truth, Mr. Dingle. Two weeks ago come next Saturday Mr. Winfield meets me in the 'all looking wild and 'arassed—it was the same day there was that big thunder-storm—and he looks at me, glassy like, and says to me: ' Keggs, 'ave my bag packed and my boxes, too; I'm going away for a time. I'll send a messenger for 'em.' And out he goes into the rain, which begins to come down cats and dogs the moment he was in the street.

"I start to go out after him with his rain-coat, thinking he'd get wet before he could find a cab, they being so scarce in this city, not like London, where you simply 'ave to raise your hand to 'ave a dozen flocking round you, but he don't stop; he just goes walking off through the rain and all, and I gets back into the house, not wishing to be wetted myself on account of my rheumatism, which is always troublesome in the damp weather. And I says to myself: ''Ullo, 'ullo, 'ullo, what's all this?'

"See what I mean? I could tell as plain as if I'd been in the room with them that they had been having words. And since that day 'e ain't been near the 'ouse, and where he is now is more than I can tell you, Mr. Dingle."

"Why, he's at the studio."

"At the studio, is he? Well, I shouldn't wonder if he wasn't better off. 'E didn't strike me as a man what was used to the ways of society. He's happier where he is, I expect."

And, having summed matters up in this philosophical manner, Keggs drained his glass and cocked an expectant eye at Steve.

Steve obeyed the signal and ordered a further supply of the beer for which Mr. Keggs had a plebeian and unbutlerlike fondness. His companion turned the conversation to the prospects of one of that group of inefficient middleweights whom Steve so heartily despised, between whom and another of the same degraded band a ten-round contest had been arranged and would shortly take place.

Ordinarily this would have been a subject on which Steve would have found plenty to say, but his mind was occupied with what he had just heard, and he sat silent while the silver-haired patron of sport opposite prattled on respecting current form.

Steve felt stunned. It was unthinkable that this thing had really occurred.

Mr. Keggs, sipping beer, discussed the coming fight. He weighed the alleged left hook of one principal against the much-advertised right swing of the other. He spoke with apprehension of a yellow streak which certain purists claimed to have discovered in the gladiator on whose chances he proposed to invest his cash.

Steve was not listening to him. A sudden thought had come to him, filling his mind to the exclusion of all else.

The recollection of his talk with Kirk at the studio had come back to him. He had advised Kirk, as a solution of his difficulties, to kidnap the child and take him to Connecticut. Well, Kirk was out of the running now, but he, Steve, was still in it.

He would do it himself.

The idea thrilled him. It was so in keeping with his theory of the virtue of the swift and immediate punch, administered with the minimum of preliminary sparring. There was a risk attached to the scheme which appealed to him. Above all, he honestly believed that it would achieve its object, the straightening out of the tangle which Ruth and Kirk had made of their lives.

When once an idea had entered Steve's head he was tenacious of it. He had come to the decision that Ruth needed what he called a jolt to bring her to herself, much as a sleep-walker is aroused by the touch of a hand, and he clung to it.

He interrupted Mr. Keggs in the middle of a speech touching on his man's alleged yellow streak.

"Will you be at home to-night, colonel?" he asked.

"I certainly will, Mr. Dingle."

"Mind if I look in?"

"I shall be delighted. I can offer you a cigar that I think you'll appreciate, and we can continue this little chat at our leisure. Mrs. Winfield's dining out, and that there Porter, thank Gawd, 'as gone to Boston."

CHAPTER IX

AT ONE IN THE MORNING

William Bannister Winfield slept the peaceful sleep of childhood in his sterilized cot. The night-light gleamed faintly on the white tiles. It lit up the brass knobs on the walls, the spotless curtains, the large thermometer.

An intruder, interested in these things, would have seen by a glance at this last that the temperature of the room was exactly that recommended by doctors as the correct temperature for the nursery of a sleeping child; no higher, no lower. The transom over the door was closed, but the window was open at the top to precisely the extent advocated by the authorities, due consideration having been taken for the time of year and the condition of the outer atmosphere.

The hour was one in the morning.

Childhood is a readily adaptable time of life, and William Bannister, after a few days of blank astonishment, varied by open mutiny, had accepted the change in his surroundings and daily existence with admirable philosophy. His memory was not far-reaching, and, as time went on and he began to accommodate himself to the new situation, he had gradually forgotten the days at the studio, as, it is to be supposed, he had forgotten the clouds of glory which he had trailed on his entry into this world. If memories of past bear-hunts among the canvases on the dusty floor ever came to him now, he never mentioned it.

A child can weave romance into any condition of life in which fate places him; and William Bannister had managed to interest himself in his present existence with a considerable gusto. Scraps of conversation between Mrs. Porter and Mamie, overheard and digested, had given him a good working knowledge of the system of hygiene of which he was the center. He was vague as to details, but not vaguer than most people.

He knew that something called "sterilizing" was the beginning and end of life, and that things known as germs were the Great Peril. He had expended much thought on the subject of germs. Mamie, questioned, could give him no more definite information than that they were "things which got at you and hurt you," and his awe of Mrs. Porter had kept him from going to the fountainhead of knowledge for further data.

Building on the information to hand, he had formed in his mind an odd kind of anthropomorphic image of the germ. He pictured it as a squat, thick-set man of repellent aspect and stealthy movements, who sneaked up on you when you were not looking and did unpleasant things to you, selecting as the time for his attacks those nights when you had allowed your attention to wander while saying your prayers.

On such occasions it was Bill's practise to fool him by repeating his prayers to himself in bed after the official ceremony. Sometimes, to make certain, he would do this so often that he fell asleep in mid prayer.

He was always glad of the night-light. A germ hates light, preferring to do his scoundrelly work when it is so black that you can't see your hand in front of your face and the darkness presses down on you like a blanket. Occasionally a fear would cross his mind that the night-light might go out; but it never did, being one of Mr. Edison's best electric efforts neatly draped with black veiling.

Apart from this he had few worries, certainly none serious enough to keep him awake.

He was sleeping now, his head on his right arm, a sterilized Teddy-bear clutched firmly in his other hand, with the concentration of one engaged upon a feat at which he is an expert.

The door opened slowly. A head insinuated itself into the room, furtively, as if uncertain of its welcome. The door continued to open and Steve slipped in.

He closed the door as gently as he had opened it, and stood there glancing about him. A slow grin appeared upon his face, to be succeeded by an expression of serious resolve. For Steve was anxious.

It was still Steve's intention to remove, steal, purloin, and kidnap William Bannister that night, but now that the moment had come for doing it he was nervous.

He was not used to this sort of thing. He was an honest ex-middleweight, not a burglar; and just now he felt particularly burglarious. The stillness of the house oppressed him. He had not relished the long wait between the moment of his apparent departure and that of his entry into the nursery.

He had acted with simple cunning. He had remained talking pugilism with Keggs in the pantry till a prodigious yawn from his host had told him that the time was come for the breaking up of the party. Then, begging Keggs not to move, as he could find his way out, he had hurried to the back door, opened and shut it, and darted into hiding. Presently Keggs, yawning loudly, had toddled along the passage, bolted the door, and made his way up-stairs to bed, leaving Steve to his vigil.

Steve's reflections during this period had not been of the pleasantest. Exactly what his explanation was to be, if by any mischance he should make a noise and be detected, he had been unable to decide. Finally he had dismissed the problem as insoluble, and had concentrated his mind

"ARE YOU A GERM?" INQUIRED WILLIAM BANNISTER

on taking precautions to omit any such noise.

So far he had succeeded. He had found his way to the nursery easily enough, having marked the location earnestly on his previous visits. During the whole of his conversation with Keggs in the pantry he had been repeating to himself the magic formula which began: "First staircase to the left—turn to the right—" and here he was now at his goal and ready to begin.

But it was just this question of beginning which exercised him so grievously. How was he to begin? Should he go straight to the cot and wake the kid? Suppose the kid was scared and let out a howl?

A warm, prickly sensation about the forehead was Steve's silent comment on this reflection. He took a step forward and stopped again. He was conscious of tremors about the region of the spine. The thought crossed his mind at that moment that burglars earned their money.

As he stood, hesitating, his problem was solved for him. There came a heavy sigh from the direction of the cot which made him start as if a pistol had exploded in his ear; and then he was aware of two large eyes staring at him.

There was a tense pause. A drop of perspiration rolled down his cheek-bone and anchored itself stickily on the angle of his jaw. It tickled abominably, but he did not dare to move for fear of unleashing the scream which brooded over the situation like a cloud.

At any moment now a howl of terror might rip the silence and bring the household on the run. And then—the explanations! A second drop of perspiration started out in the wake of the first.

The large eyes continued to inspect him. They were clouded with sleep. Suddenly a frightened look came into them, and, as he saw it, Steve braced his muscles for the shock.

"Here it comes!" he said miserably to himself. "Oh, Lord! We're off!"

He searched in his brain for speech, desperately, as the best man at a wedding searches for that ring while the universe stands still, waiting expectantly.

He found no speech.

The child's mouth opened. Steve eyed

him, fascinated. No bird, encountering a snake, was ever so incapable of movement as he.

" Are you a germ?" inquired William Bannister.

Steve tottered to the cot and sat down on it. The relief was too much for him.

" Gee, kid!" he said, " you had my goat then. I've got to hand it to you."

His sudden approach had confirmed William Bannister's worst suspicions. This was precisely how he had expected the germ to behave. He shrank back on the pillow, gulping.

" Why, for the love of Mike," said Steve, " don't you know me, kid? I'm not a porch-climber. Don't you remember Steve who used to raise Hades with you at the studio? Darn it, I'm your godfather! I'm Steve!"

William Bannister sat up, partially reassured.

" What's Steve?" he inquired.

" I'm Steve."

" Why?"

" How do you mean—why?"

The large eyes inspected him gravely.

" I remember," he said finally.

" Well, don't go forgetting, kid. I couldn't stand a second session like that. I got a weak heart."

" You're Steve."

" That's right. Stick to that and we'll get along fine."

" I thought you were a germ."

" A what?"

" They get at you and hurt you."

" Who said so?"

" Mamie."

" Are you scared of germs?"

The White Hope nodded gravely.

" I have to be sterilized because of them. Are you sterilized?"

" Nobody ever told me so. But, say, kid, you don't want to be frightened of germs or microbes or bacilli or any of the rest of the circus. You don't want to be frightened of nothing. You're the White Hope, the bear-cat that ain't scared of anything on earth. What's this germ thing like, anyway?"

" It's a— I've never seen one, but Mamie says they get at you and hurt you. I think it's a kind of big sort of ugly man that creeps in when you're asleep."

" So that's why you thought I was one?"

The White Hope nodded.

" Forget it!" said Steve. " Mamie is a queen, all right, believe me, but she's got the wrong dope on this microbe proposition. You don't need to be scared of them any more. Why, some of me best pals are germs."

" What's pals?"

" Why, friends. You and me are pals. Me and your pop are pals."

" Where's pop?"

" He's gone away."

" I remember."

" He thought he needed a change of air. Don't you ever feel you need a change of air?"

" I don't know."

" Well, you do. Take it from me. This is about the punkest joint I ever was in. You don't want to stay in a dairy-kitchen like this."

" What's dairy-kitchen?"

" This is. All these white tiles and fixings. It makes me feel like a pint of milk to look at 'em."

" It's because of the germs."

" Ain't I telling you the germs don't want to hurt you?"

" Aunt Lora told Mamie they do."

" Say, cull, you tell your Aunt Lora to make a noise like an ice-cream in the sun and melt away. She's a prune, and what she says don't go. Do you want to know what a germ or a microbe—it's the same thing—really is? It's a fellow that has the best time you can think of. They've been fooling you, kid. They saw you were easy, so they handed it to you on a plate. I'm the guy that can put you wise about microbes."

" Tell me."

" Sure. Well, a microbe is a kid that just runs wild out in the country. He don't have to hang around in a white-tiled nursery and eat sterilized junk and go to bed when they tell him to. He has a swell time out in the woods, fishing and playing around in the dirt and going after birds' eggs and picking berries, and—oh, shucks, anything else you can think of. Wouldn't you like to do that?"

William Bannister nodded.

" Well, say, as it happens, there's a fine chance for you to be a germ right away. I know a little place down in the Connecticut woods which would just hit you right. You could put on overalls—"

" What's overalls?"

" Sort of clothes. Not like the fussed-up scenery you have to wear now, but the real sort of clothes which you can muss up and nobody cares a darn. You can put 'em on and go out and tear up Jack like a regular kid all you want. Say, don't you remember the fool stunts you and me used to pull off in the studio?"

"What's studio?"

"Gee! you're a bit shy on your English, ain't you? It makes it sort of hard for a guy to keep up what you might call a flow of talk. Still, you should worry. Why, don't you remember where you used to live before you came to this joint? Big, dusty sort of place, where you and me used to play around on the floor?"

The White Hope nodded.

"Well, wouldn't you like to do that again?"

"Yes."

"And be a regular microbe?"

"Yes."

Steve looked at his watch.

"Well, that's lucky," he said. "It happens to be exactly the right time for starting out to be one. That's curious, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"I've got a pal—friend, you know—"

"Is he a germ?"

"Sure. He's waiting for me now in an automobile in the park—"

"Why?"

"Because I asked him to. He owns a garage. Place where automobiles live, you know. I asked him to bring out a car and wait around near by, because I might be taking a pal of mine—that's you—for a ride into the country to-night. Of course, you don't have to come if you don't want to. Only it's mighty nice out there. You can spend all to-morrow rolling about in the grass and listening to the birds. I shouldn't wonder if we couldn't borrow a farmer's kid for you to play with. There's lots of them around. He would show you the best time you've had in months."

William Bannister's eyes gleamed. The finer points of the scheme were beginning to stand out before him with a growing clarity.

"Would I have to take my bib?" he asked excitedly.

Steve uttered a scornful laugh.

"No, *sir!* We don't wear bibs out there."

As far as William Bannister was concerned, this appeared to settle it. Of all the trials of his young life he hated most his bib.

"Let's go!"

Steve breathed a sigh of relief.

"Right, squire; we will," he said. "But I guess we had best leave a letter for Mamie, so's she won't be wondering where you've got to."

"Will Mamie be cross?"

"Not on your life. She'll be tickled to death."

He scribbled a few lines on a piece of paper and left them on the cot, from which William Bannister had now scrambled.

"Can you dress yourself?" asked Steve.

"Oh, yes." It was an accomplishment of which the White Hope was extremely proud.

"Well, go to it, then."

"Steve."

"Hello?"

"Won't it be a surprise for Mamie?"

"You bet it will. And she won't be the only one, at that."

"Will mother be surprised?"

"She sure will."

"And pop?"

"You bet!"

William Bannister chuckled delightedly.

"Ready?" said Steve.

"Yes."

"Now listen. We've got to get out of this joint as quiet as mice. It would spoil the surprise if they was to hear us and come out and ask what we were doing. Get that?"

"Yes."

"Well, see how quiet you can make it. You don't want even to breathe more than you can help."

They left the room and crept down the dark stairs. In the hall Steve lit a match and switched on the electric light. He unbolted the door and peered out into the avenue. Close by, under the trees, stood an automobile, its headlights staring into the night.

"Quick!" cried Steve.

He picked up the White Hope, closed the door, and ran.

CHAPTER X

ACCEPTING THE GIFTS OF THE GODS

It was fortunate, considering the magnitude of the shock which she was to receive, that circumstances had given Steve's Mamie unusual powers of resistance in the matter of shocks. For years before her introduction into the home of the Winfield family her life had been one long series of crises. She had never known what the morrow might bring forth, though experience had convinced her that it was pretty certain to bring forth something agitating which would call for all her well-known ability to handle disaster.

The sole care of three small brothers and a weak-minded father gives a girl exceptional opportunities of cultivating poise under difficult conditions. It had become second nature with Mamie to keep her head though the heavens fell.

Consequently, when she entered the nursery next morning and found it empty, she did not go into hysterics. She did not even scream. She read Steve's note twice very carefully, then sat down to think what was her best plan of action.

Her ingrained habit of looking on the bright side of things, the result of a life which, had pessimism been allowed to rule it, might have ended prematurely with what the papers are fond of calling a " rash act," led her to consider first those points in the situation which she labeled in her meditations as " bits of luck."

It was a bit of luck that Mrs. Porter happened to be away for the moment. It gave her time for reflection. It was another bit of luck that, as she had learned from Keggs, whom she met on the stairs on her way to the nursery, a mysterious telephone-call had caused Ruth to rise from her bed some three hours before her usual time and depart hurriedly in a cab. This also helped.

Keggs had no information to give as to Ruth's destination or the probable hour of her return. She had vanished without a word, except a request to Keggs to tell the driver of her taxi to go to the Thirty-Third Street subway.

"Must 'a' 'ah bad noos," Keggs thought, "because she were look'n' white as a sheet."

Mamie was sorry that Ruth had had bad news, but her departure certainly helped to relieve the pressure of an appalling situation.

With the absence of Ruth and Mrs. Porter the bits of luck came to an end. Try as she would, Mamie could discover no other silver linings in the cloud-bank. And even these ameliorations of the disaster were only temporary.

Ruth would return. Worse, Mrs. Porter would return. Like two Mother Hubbards, they would go to the cupboard, and the cupboard would be bare. And to her, Mamie, would fall the task of explanation.

The only explanation that occurred to her was that Steve had gone suddenly mad. He had given no hint of his altruistic motives in the hurried scrawl which she had found on the empty cot. He had merely said that he had taken away William Bannister, but that " it was all right."

Why Steve should imagine that it was all right baffled Mamie. Anything less all right she had never come across in a lifetime of disconcerting experiences.

She was aware that things were not as they should be between Ruth and Kirk, and the spectacle of the broken home had troubled her gentle heart; but she failed to establish a connection between Kirk's departure and Steve's midnight raid.

After devoting some ten minutes to steady brainwork she permitted herself the indulgence of a few tears. She did not often behave in this shockingly weak way, her rôle in life hitherto having been that of the one calm person in a disrupted world. When her father had lost his job, and the rent was due, and Brother Jim had fallen in the mud to the detriment of his only suit of clothes, and Brothers Terence and Mike had developed respectively a sore throat and a funny feeling in the chest, she had remained dry-eyed and capable. Her father had cried, her brother Jim had cried, her brother Terence had cried, and her brother Mike had cried in a manner that made the weeping of the rest of the family seem like the uncanny stillness of a summer night; but she had not shed a tear.

Now, however, she gave way. She buried her little face on the pillow which so brief a while before had been pressed by the round head of William Bannister and mourned like a modern Niobe.

At the end of two minutes she rose, sniffing but courageous, herself again. In her misery an idea had come to her. It was quite a simple and obvious idea, but till now it had eluded her.

She would go round to the studio and see Kirk. After all, it was his affair as much as anybody else's, and she had a feeling that it would be easier to break the news to him than to Ruth and Mrs. Porter.

She washed her eyes, put on her hat, and set out.

Luck, however, was not running her way that morning. Arriving at the studio, she rang the bell, and rang and rang again without result except a marked increase in her already substantial depression. When it became plain to her that the studio was empty she desisted.

It is an illustration of her remarkable force of character that at this point, refusing to be crushed by the bludgeoning of fate, she walked to Broadway and went into a moving-picture palace. There was nothing to be effected by staying in the house and worrying, so she resolutely declined to worry.

From this point onward her day divided itself into a series of three movements repeated at regular intervals. From the moving pictures she went to the house on Fifth Avenue. Finding that neither Ruth nor Mrs. Porter had returned, she went to the studio. Ringing the bell there and getting no answer, she took in the movies once more.

Mamie was a philosopher.

The atmosphere of the great house was still untroubled on her second visit. The care of the White Hope had always been left exclusively in the hands of the women, and the rest of the household had not yet detected his absence. It was not their business to watch his comings in and his goings out. Besides, they had other things to occupy them.

The unique occasion of the double absence of Ruth and Mrs. Porter was being celebrated by a sort of Saturnalia or slaves' holiday. It was true that either or both might return at any moment, but there was a disposition on the part of the domestic staff to take a chance on it.

Keggs, that sinful butler, had strolled round to an apparently untenanted house on Forty-First Street, where those who knew their New York could, by giving the signal, obtain admittance and the privilege of losing their money at the pleasing game of roulette with a double zero.

George, the footman, in company with Henriette, the lady's-maid, and Rollins, the chauffeur, who had butted in absolutely uninvited, to George's acute disgust, were taking the air in the park. The rest of the staff, with the exception of a housemaid, who had been bribed, with two dollars and an old dress which had once been Ruth's and was now the property of Henriette, to stand by the ship, were somewhere on the island, amusing themselves in the way that seemed best to them. For all practical purposes, it was a safe and sane Fourth provided out of a blue sky by the god of chance.

It was about five o'clock when Mamie, having, at a modest estimate, seen five hundred persecuted heroes, a thousand ill-used heroines, several regiments of cowboys, and perhaps two thousand comic men pursued by angry mobs, returned for her usual visit to the studio.

This time there were signs of hope in the shape of a large automobile opposite the door. She rang the bell, and there came from within the welcome sound of footsteps. An elderly man of a somewhat dissipated countenance opened the door.

"I want to see Mr. Winfield," said Mamie.

Mr. Penway, for it was he, gave her the approving glance which your man of taste and discrimination does not fail to bestow upon youth and beauty and bawled over his shoulder:

"Kirk!"

Kirk came down the passage. He was looking brown and healthy. He was in his shirt-sleeves.

"Oh, Mr. Winfield, I'm in such trouble."

"Why, Mamie! What's the matter? Come in."

Mamie followed him into the studio, eluding Mr. Penway, whose arm was hovering in the neighborhood of her waist.

"Sit down," said Kirk. "What's the trouble? Have you been trying to get at me before? We've been down to Long Beach."

"A delightful spot," observed Mr. Penway, who had followed. "Sandy, but replete with squabs. Why didn't you come earlier? We could have taken you."

"May I talk privately with you, Mr. Winfield?"

"Sure."

Kirk looked at Mr. Penway, who nodded agreeably.

"Outside for Robert?" he inquired amiably. "Very well. There is no Buttinsky blood in the Penway family. Let me just fix myself a high-ball and borrow one of your cigars and I'll go and sit in the car and commune with nature. Take your time."

"Just a moment, Mamie," said Kirk, when he had gone. He picked up a telegram which lay on the table. "I'll read this and see if it's important, and then we'll get right down to business. We only got back a moment before you arrived, so I'm a bit behind with my correspondence."

As he read the telegram a look of astonishment came into his face. He sat down and read the message a second time. Mamie waited patiently.

"Good Lord!" he muttered.

A sudden thought struck Mamie.

"Mr. Winfield, is it from Steve?" she said.

Kirk started, and looked at her incredulously.

"How on earth did you know? Good Heavens! Are you in this, Mamie, too?"

Mamie handed him her note. He read it without a word. When he had finished he sat back in his chair, thinking.

"I thought Steve might have telegraphed to you," said Mamie.

Kirk roused himself from his thoughts.

"Was this what you came to see me about?"

"Yes."

"What does Ruth—what do they think of it—up there?"

"They don't know anything about it. Mrs. Winfield went away early this morning. Mr. Keggs said she had had a telephone call. Mrs. Porter is in Boston. She will be back to-day some time. What are we to do?"

"Do!" Kirk jumped up and began to pace the floor. "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. Steve has taken the boy up to my shack in Connecticut. I'm going there as fast as the auto can take me."

"Steve's mad!"

"Is he? Steve's the best pal I've got. For two years I've been aching to get at this boy, and Steve has had the sense to show me the way."

He went on as if talking to himself.

"Steve's a man. I'm just a fool who hangs round without the nerve to act. If I had had the pluck of a rabbit I'd have done this myself six months ago. But I've hung round doing nothing while that damned Porter woman played the fool with the boy. I'll be lucky now if he remembers who I am."

He turned abruptly to Mamie.

"Mamie, you can tell them whatever you please when you get home. They can't blame you. It's not your fault. Tell them that Steve was acting for me with my complete approval. Tell them that the kid's going to be brought up right from now on. I've got him, and I'm going to keep him."

Mamie had risen and was facing him, a very determined midget, pink and resolute.

"I'm not going home, Mr. Winfield."

"What?"

"If you are going to Bill, I am coming with you."

"Nonsense."

"That's my place—with him."

"But you can't. It's impossible."

"Not more impossible that what has happened already."

"I won't take you."

"Then I'll go by train. I know where your house it. Steve told me."

"It's out of the question."

Mamie's Irish temper got the better of her professional desire to maintain the discreetly respectful attitude of employee toward employer.

"Is it then? We'll see. Do you think I'm going to leave you and that Steve to look after my Bill? What do men know about taking care of children? You would choke the poor mite or let him kill himself a hundred ways."

She glared at him defiantly. He glared back at her. Then his sense of humor came to his rescue. She looked so absurdly small standing there with her chin up and her fists clenched. He laughed delightedly. He went up to her and placed a hand on each of her shoulders, looking down at her. He felt that he loved her for her championship of Bill.

"You're a brick, Mamie. Of course you shall come. We'll call at the house and you can pack your grip. But, by George, if you put that infernal thermometer in I'll run the automobile up against a telegraph-pole, and then Bill will lose us both."

"Finished?" said a voice. "Oh, I beg your pardon. Sorry."

Mr. Penway was gazing at them with affectionate interest from the doorway. Kirk released Mamie and stepped back.

"I only looked in," explained Mr. Penway. "Didn't mean to intrude. Thought you might have finished your chat, and it was a trifle lonely communing with nature."

"Bob," said Kirk, "you'll have to get on without me for a day or two. Make yourself at home. You know where everything is."

"I can satisfy my simple needs. Thinking of going away?"

"I've got to go up to Connecticut. I don't know how long I shall be away."

"Take your time," said Mr. Penway affably. "Going in the auto?"

"Yes."

"The weather is very pleasant for automobiling just now," remarked Mr. Penway.

Ten minutes later, having thrown a few things together into a bag, Kirk took his place at the wheel. Mamie sat beside him. The bag had the rear seat to itself.

"There seems to be plenty of room still," said Mr. Penway. "I have half a mind to come with you."

He looked at Mamie.

"But on reflection I fancy you can get along without me."

He stood at the door, gazing after the motor as it moved down the street. When it had turned the corner he went back into the studio and mixed himself a high-ball.

"Kirk does manage to find them," he said enviously.

CHAPTER XI

MR. PENWAY ON THE GRILL

Fate moves in a mysterious way. Luck comes hand in hand with misfortune. What we lose on the swings we make up on the roundabouts. If Keggs had not seen twenty-five of his hard-earned dollars pass at one swoop into the clutches of the *croupier* at the apparently untenanted house on Forty-First Street, and become disgusted with the pleasing game of roulette, he might have delayed his return to the house on Fifth Avenue till a later hour; in which case he would have missed the remarkable and stimulating spectacle of Kirk driving to the door in an automobile with Mamie at his side; of Mamie jumping out and entering the house; of Mamie leaving the house with a suit-case; of Kirk helping her into the automobile, and of the automobile disappearing with its interesting occupants up the avenue at a high rate of speed.

Having lost his money, as stated, and having returned home, he was enabled to be a witness, the only witness, of these notable events, and his breast was filled with a calm joy in consequence.

This was something special. This was exclusive, a scoop. He looked forward to the return of Mrs. Porter with an eagerness which, earlier in the day, he would have considered impossible. Somehow Ruth did not figure in his picture of the delivery of the sensational news that Mr. Winfield had eloped with the young person engaged to look after her son. Mrs. Porter's was one of those forceful characters which monopolize any stage on which they appear. Besides, Keggs disliked Mrs. Porter, and the pleasure of the prospect of giving her a shock left no room for other thoughts.

It was nearly seven o'clock when Mrs. Porter reached the house. She was a little tired from the journey, but in high good humor. She had had a thoroughly satisfactory interview with her publishers—satisfactory, that is to say, to herself; the publishers had other views.

"Is Mrs. Winfield in?" she asked Keggs as he admitted her.

Ruth was always sympathetic about her guerrilla warfare with the publishers. She looked forward to a cozy chat, in the course of which she would trace, step by step, the progress of the late campaign which had begun overnight and had culminated that morning in a sort of Gettysburg, from which she had emerged with her arms full of captured flags and all the other trophies of conquest.

"No, madam," said Keggs. "Mrs. Winfield has not yet returned."

Keggs was an artist in tragic narration. He did not give away his climax; he led up to it by degrees as slow as his audience would permit.

"Returned? I did not know she intended to go away. Her yacht party is next week, I understood."

"Yes, madam."

"Where has she gone?"

"To Tuxedo, madam."

"Tuxedo?"

"Mrs. Winfield has just rung us up from there upon the telephone to request that necessaries for an indefinite stay be despatched to her. She is visiting Mrs. Bailey Bannister."

If Mrs. Porter had been Steve, she would probably have said "For the love of Mike!" at this point. Being herself, she merely repeated the butler's last words.

"If I may be allowed to say so, madam, I think that there must have been trouble at Mrs. Bannister's. A telephone-call came from her very early this morning for Mrs. Winfield which caused Mrs. Winfield to rise and leave in a taximeter-cab in an extreme hurry. If I might be allowed to suggest it, it is probably a case of serious illness. Mrs. Winfield was looking very disturbed."

"H-m!" said Mrs. Porter. The exclamation was one of disappointment rather than of apprehension. Sudden illnesses at the Bailey home did not stir her, but she was annoyed that her recital of the squelching of the publishers would have to wait.

She went up-stairs. Her intention was to look in at the nursery and satisfy herself that all was well with William Bannister. She had given Mamie specific instructions as to his care on her departure; but you never knew. Perhaps her keen eye might be able to detect some deviation from the rules she had laid down.

It detected one at once. The nursery was empty. According to schedule, the child should have been taking his bath.

She went down-stairs again. Keggs was waiting in the hall. He had foreseen this return. He had allowed her to go up-stairs with his story but half heard because that appealed to his artistic sense. This story, to his mind, was too good to be bolted at a sitting; it was the ideal serial.

"Keggs."

"Madam?"

"Where is Master William?"

"I fear I do not know, madam."

"When did he go out? It is seven o'clock; he should have been in an hour ago."

"I have been making inquiries, madam, and I regret to inform you that nobody appears to have seen Master William all day."

"What!"

"It not being my place to follow his movements, I was unaware of this until quite recently, but from conversation with the other domestics, I find that he seems to have disappeared!"

"Disappeared!"

A glow of enjoyment such as he had sometimes experienced when the ticker at the Cadillac Hotel informed him that the man he had backed in some San Francisco fight had upset his opponent for the count began to permeate Keggs.

"Disappeared, madam," he repeated.

"Perhaps Mrs. Winfield took him with her to Tuxedo."

"No, madam. Mrs. Winfield was alone. I was present when she drove away."

"Send Mamie to me at once," said Mrs. Porter.

Keggs could have whooped with delight had not such an action seemed to him likely to prejudice his chances of retaining a good situation. He contented himself with wriggling ecstatically.

"The young person is not in the house, madam."

"Not in the house? What business has she to be out? Where is she?"

"I could not tell you, madam." Keggs paused, reluctant to deal the final blow, as a child lingers lovingly over the last lick of ice-cream in a cone. "I last saw her at about five o'clock, driving off with Mr. Winfield in an automobile."

"What!"

Keggs was content. His climax had not missed fire. Its staggering effect was plain on the astounded face of his hearer. For once Mrs. Porter's poise had deserted her. Her one word had been a scream.

"She did not tell me her destination, madam," went on Keggs, making all that could be made of what was left of the situation after its artistic finish. "She came in and packed a suit-case and went out again and joined Mr. Winfield in the automobile, and they drove off together."

Mrs. Porter recovered herself. This was a matter which called for silent meditation, not for chit-chat with a garrulous butler.

"That will do, Keggs."

"Very good, madam."

Keggs withdrew to his pantry, well pleased. He considered that he had done himself justice as a raconteur. He had not spoiled a good story in the telling.

Mrs. Porter went to her room and sat down to think. She was a woman of action, and she soon reached a decision.

The errant pair must be followed, and at once. Her great mind, playing over the situation like a search-light, detected a connection between this elopement and the disappearance of William Bannister. She had long since marked Kirk down as a malcontent, and she now labeled the absent Mamie as a snake in the grass who had feigned submission to her rule, while meditating all the time the theft of the child and the elopement with Kirk. She had placed the same construction on Mamie's departure with Kirk as had Mr. Penway, showing that it is not only great minds that think alike.

A latent conviction as to the immorality of all artists, which had been one of the maxims of her late mother, sprang into life. She blamed herself for having allowed a nurse of such undeniable physical attractions to become a member of the household. Mamie's very quietness and apparent absence of bad qualities became additional evidence against her now, Mrs. Porter arguing that these things indicated deep deceitfulness. She told herself, what was not the case, that she had never trusted that girl.

But Lora Delane Porter was not the woman to waste time in retrospection. She had not been in her room five minutes before her mind was made up. It was improbable that Kirk and his guilty accomplice had sought so near and obvious a haven as the studio, but it was undoubtedly there that pursuit must begin. She knew nothing of his way of living at that retreat, but she imagined that he must have appointed some successor to George Pennicut as general factotum, and it might be that this person would have information to impart.

The task of inducing him to impart it did not daunt Mrs. Porter. She had a just confidence in her powers of cross-examination.

She went to the telephone and called up the garage where Ruth's automobiles were housed. Her plan of action was now complete. If no information were forthcoming at the studio, she would endeavor to find out where Kirk had hired the car in which he had taken Mamie away. He would probably have secured it from some garage near by. But this detective work would be a last resource. Like a good general, she did not admit of the possibility of failing in her first attack.

And, luck being with her, it happened that at the moment when she set out, Mr. Penway, feeling pretty comfortable where he was, abandoned his idea of going out for a stroll along Broadway and settled himself to pass the next few hours in Kirk's armchair.

Mr. Penway's first feeling when the bell rang, rousing him from his peaceful musings, was one of mild vexation. A few minutes later, when Mrs. Porter had really got to work upon him, he would not have recognized that tepid emotion as vexation at all.

Mrs. Porter wasted no time. She perforated Mr. Penway's spine with her eyes, reduced it to the consistency of summer squash, and drove him before her into the studio, where she took a seat and motioned him to do the same. For a moment she sat looking at him, by way of completing the work of subjection, while Mr. Penway writhed uneasily on his chair and thought of past sins.

"My name is Mrs. Porter," she began abruptly.

"Mine's Penway," said the miserable being before her. It struck him as the only thing to say.

"I have come to inquire about Mr. Winfield."

As she paused Mr. Penway felt it incumbent upon him to speak again.

"Dear old Kirk," he mumbled.

"Nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Porter sharply. "Mr. Winfield is a scoundrel of the worst type, and if you are as intimate a friend of his as your words imply, it does not argue well for your respectability."

Mr. Penway opened his mouth feebly and closed it again. Having closed it, he reopened it and allowed it to remain ajar, as it were. It was his idea of being conciliatory.

"Tell me." Mr. Penway started violently. "Tell me, when did you last see Mr. Winfield?"

"We went to Long Beach together this afternoon."

"In an automobile?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Were you here when Mr. Winfield left again?"

For the life of him Mr. Penway had not the courage to say no. There was something about this woman's stare which acted hypnotically upon his mind, never at its best as early in the evening as this.

He nodded.

"There was a young woman with him?" pursued Mrs. Porter.

At this moment Mr. Penway's eyes, roving desperately about the room, fell upon the bottle of Bourbon which Kirk's kindly hospitality had provided. His emotions at the sight of it were those of the shipwrecked mariner who sees a sail. He sprang at it and poured himself out a stiff dose. Before Mrs. Porter's disgusted gaze he drained the glass and then turned to her, a new man.

The noble spirit restored his own. For

the first time since the interview had begun he felt capable of sustaining his end of the conversation with ease and dignity.

"How's that?" he said.

"There was a young woman with him?" repeated Mrs. Porter.

Mr. Penway imagined that he had placed her by this time. Here, he told himself in his own crude language, was the squab's mother camping on Kirk's trail with an ax. Mr. Penway's moral code was of the easiest description. His sympathies were entirely with Kirk. Fortified by the Bourbon, he set himself resolutely to the task of lying whole-heartedly on behalf of his absent friend.

"No," he said firmly.

"No!" exclaimed Mrs. Porter.

"No," repeated Mr. Penway with iron resolution. "No young woman. No young woman whatsoever. I noticed it particularly, because I thought it strange, don't you know — what I mean is, don't you know, strange there shouldn't be!"

How tragic is a man's fruitless fight on behalf of a friend. For one short instant Mrs. Porter allowed Mr. Penway to imagine that the victory was his, then she administered the *coup-de-grâce*.

"Don't lie to me, you worthless creature," she said. "They stopped at my house on their way while the girl packed a suit-case."

Mr. Penway threw up his brief. There are moments when the stoutest-hearted, even under the influence of old Bourbon, realize that to fight on is merely to fight in vain.

He condensed his emotions into four words.

"Of all the chumps!" he remarked, and, pouring himself out a further instalment of the raw spirit, he sat down, a beaten man.

Mrs. Porter continued to harry him.

"Exactly," she said. "So you see that there is no need for any more subterfuge and concealment. I do not intend to leave this room until you have told me all you have to tell, so you had better be quick about it. Kindly tell me the truth in as few words as possible—if you know what is meant by telling the truth."

A belated tenderness for his dignity came to Mr. Penway.

"You are insulting," he remarked. "You are—you are—most insulting."

"I meant to be," said Mrs. Porter crisply. "Now. Tell me. Where has Mr. Winfield gone?"

Mr. Penway preserved an offended silence. Mrs. Porter struck the table a blow with a book which caused him to leap in his seat.

"Where has Mr. Winfield gone?"

"How should I know?"

"How should you know? Because he told you, I should imagine. Where—has—Mr.—Winfield—gone?"

"C'nnecticut," said Mr. Penway, finally capitulating.

"What part of Connecticut?"

"I don't know."

"What part of Connecticut?"

"I tell you I don't know. He said: 'I'm off to Connecticut,' and left." It suddenly struck Mr. Penway that his defeat was not so overwhelming as he had imagined. "So you haven't got much out of me, you see, after all," he added.

Mrs. Porter rose.

"On the contrary," she said; "I have got out of you precisely the information which I required, and in considerably less time that I had supposed likely. If it interests you, I may tell you that Mr. Winfield has gone to a small house which he owns in the Connecticut woods."

"Then what," demanded Mr. Penway indignantly, "did you mean by keeping on saying 'What part of C'nnecticut? What part of C'nnecticut? What part—'"

"Because Mr. Winfield's destination has only just occurred to me." She looked at him closely. "You are a curious and not uninteresting object, Mr. Penway."

Mr. Penway started.

"Eh?"

"Object lesson, I should have said. I should like to exhibit you as a warning to the youth of this country."

"What!"

"From the look of your frame I should imagine that you were once a man of some physique. Your shoulders are good. Even now a rigorous course of physical training might save you. I have known more hopeless cases saved by firm treatment. You have allowed yourself to deteriorate much as did a man named Pennicut who used to be employed here by Mr. Winfield. I saved him. I dare say I could make something of you. I can see at a glance that you eat, drink, and smoke too much. You could not hold out your hand now, at this minute, without it trembling."

" I could," said Mr. Penway indignantly.

He held it out, and it quivered like a tuning-fork.

" There!" said Mrs. Porter calmly. " What do you expect? You know your own business best, I suppose, but I should like to tell you that if you do not become a teetotaler instantly, and begin taking exercise, you will probably die suddenly within a very few years. Personally I shall bear the calamity with fortitude. Good evening, Mr. Penway."

For some moments after she had gone Mr. Penway sat staring feebly before him. His eyes wore a glassy look. His mouth was still ajar.

" DON'T LIE TO ME, YOU WORTHLESS CREATURE," SHE SAID

" Damn woman!" he said at length.

He turned to his meditations.

" Damn impertinent woman!"

Another interval for reflection, and he spoke again.

" Damn impertinent, interfering woman that! "

He reached out for the bottle of Bourbon and filled his glass. He put it to his lips, then slowly withdrew it.

" Damn impertinent, inter—I wonder!"

There was a small mirror on the opposite wall. He walked unsteadily toward it and put out his tongue. He continued in this attitude for a time, then, with increased dejection, turned away.

He placed a hand over his heart. This seemed to depress him still further.

Finally he went to the table, took up the glass, poured its contents carefully back into the bottle, which he corked and replaced on the shelf.

On the floor against the wall was a pair of Indian clubs. He picked these up and examined them owlishly. He gave them little tentative jerks. Finally, with the air of a man carrying out a great resolution, he began to swing them. He swung them in slow, irregular sweeps, his eyes the while, still glassy, staring fixedly at the ceiling.

CHAPTER XII

DOLLS WITH SOULS

RUTH had not seen Bailey since the afternoon when he had called to warn her against Basil Milbank. Whether it was offended dignity that kept him away, or merely pressure of business, she did not know.

That pressure of business existed, she was aware. The papers were full, and had been full for several days, of wars and rumors of wars down in Wall Street; and, though she understood nothing of finance, she knew that Bailey was in the forefront of the battle. Her knowledge was based partly on occasional references in the papers to the firm of Bannister & Co. and partly on what she heard in society.

She did not hear all that was said in society about Bailey's financial operations—which, as Bailey had the control of her money, was unfortunate for her. The manipulation of money bored her, and she had left the investing of her legacy entirely to Bailey. Her father, she knew, had always had a high opinion of Bailey's business instincts, and that was good enough for her.

She could not know how completely revolutionized the latter's mind had become since the old man's death, and how freedom had turned him from a steady young man of business to a frenzied financier.

It was common report now that Bailey was taking big chances. Some went so far as to say that he was "asking for it," "it" in his case being presumably the Nemesis which waits on those who take big chances in an uncertain market. It was in the air that he was "going up against" the Pinkey-Dowd group and the Norman-Graham combination, and everybody knew that the cemeteries of Wall Street were full of the unhonored graves of others who in years past had attempted to do the same.

Pinkey, that sinister buccaneer, could have eaten a dozen Baileys. Devouring aspiring young men of the Bailey type was Norman's chief diversion.

Ruth knew nothing of these things. She told herself that it was her abruptness that had driven Bailey away.

Weariness and depression had settled on Ruth since that afternoon of the storm. It was as if the storm had wrought an awakening in her. It had marked a definite point of change in her outlook. She felt as if she had been roused from a trance by a sharp blow.

If Steve had but known, she had had the "jolt" by which he set such store. She knew now that she had thrown away the substance for the shadow.

Kirk's anger, so unlike him, so foreign to the weak, easy-going person she had always thought him, had brought her to herself. But it was too late. There could be no going back and picking up the old threads. She had lost him, and must bear the consequences.

The withdrawal of Bailey was a small thing by comparison, a submotive in the greater tragedy. But she had always been fond of Bailey, and it hurt her to think that she should have driven him out of her life.

It seemed to her that she was very much alone now. She was marooned on a desert island of froth and laughter. Everything that mattered she had lost.

Even Bill had gone from her. The bitter justice of Kirk's words came home to her now in her time of clear thinking. It was all true. In the first excitement of the new life he had bored her. She had looked upon Mrs. Porter as a savior who brought her freedom together with an easy conscience. It had been so simple to deceive herself, to cheat herself into the comfortable belief that all that could be done for him was being done, when, as concerned the essential thing, as Kirk had said, there was no child of the streets who was not better off.

She tramped her round of social duties mechanically. Everything bored her now. The joy of life had gone out of her. She ate the bread of sorrow in captivity.

And then, this morning, had come a voice from the world she had lost—little Mrs. Bailey's voice, small and tearful.

Could she possibly come out by the next train? Bailey was very ill. Bailey was dying. Bailey had come home last night looking ghastly. He had not slept. In the early morning he had begun to *babble*—

Mrs. Bailey's voice had risen and broken on the word, and Ruth at the other end of the wire had heard her frightened sob. The doctor had come. The doctor had looked awfully grave. The doctor had telephoned to New York for another doctor. They were both up-stairs now. It was awful, and Ruth must come at once.

This was the bad news which had brought about the pallor which had impressed Mr. Keggs as he helped Ruth into her cab.

Little Mrs. Bailey was waiting for her on the platform when she got out of the train. Her face was drawn and miserable. She looked like a beaten kitten.

She hugged Ruth hysterically.

" Oh, my dear, I'm so glad you've come. He's better, but it has been awful. The doctors have had to *fight* him to keep him in bed. He was crazy to get to town. He kept saying over and over again that he must be at the office. They gave him something, and he was asleep when I left the house."

She began to cry helplessly. The fates had not bestowed upon Sybil Bannister the same care in the matter of education for times of crisis which they had accorded to Steve's Mamie. Her life till now had been sheltered and unruffled, and disaster, swooping upon her, had found her an easy victim.

She was trying to be brave, but her powers of resistance were small like her body. She clung to Ruth as a child clings to its mother. Ruth, as she tried to comfort her, felt curiously old. It occurred to her with a suggestion almost of grotesqueness that she and Sybil had been débutantes in the same season.

They walked up to the house. The summer cottage which Bailey had taken was not far from the station. On the way, in the intervals of her sobs, Sybil told Ruth the disjointed story of what had happened.

Bailey had not been looking well for some days. She had thought it must be the heat or business worries or something. He had not eaten very much, and he had seemed too tired to talk when he got home each evening. She had begged him to take a few days' rest. That had been the only occasion in the whole of the last week when she had heard him laugh; and it had been such a horrid, ugly sort of laugh that she wished she hadn't.

He had said that if he stayed away from the office for some time to come it would mean love in a cottage for them for the rest of their lives—and not a summer cottage at Tuxedo at that. " My dear child," he had gone on, " and you know when Bailey calls me that," said Sybil, " it means that there is something the matter; for, as a rule, he never calls me anything but my name, or baby, or something like that."

Which gave Ruth a little shock of surprise. Somehow the idea of the dignified Bailey addressing his wife as baby startled her. She was certainly learning these days that she did not know people as completely as she had supposed. There seemed to be endless sides to people's characters which had never come under her notice. A sudden memory of Kirk on that fateful afternoon came to her and made her wince.

Mrs. Bailey continued: " ' My dear child,' he went on, ' this week is about the most important week you and I are ever likely to live through. It's the showdown. We either come out on top or we blow up. It's one thing or the other. And if I take a few days' holiday just now you had better start looking about for the best place to sell your jewelry.'

" Those were his very words," she said tearfully. " I remember them all. It was so unlike his usual way of talking."

Ruth acknowledged that it was. More than ever she felt that she did not know the complete Bailey.

" He was probably exaggerating," she said for the sake of saying something.

Sybil was silent for a moment.

" It isn't that that's worrying me," she went on then. " Somehow I don't seem to care at all whether we come out right or not, so long as he gets well. Last night, when I thought he was going to die, I made up my mind that I couldn't go on living without him. I wouldn't have, either."
came to Ruth was greater by a hundredfold than the first had been. She gave a quick glance at Sybil.

This time the shock of surprise which
Her small face was hard, and the little white teeth gleamed between her drawn lips. It was the face, for one brief instant, of a fanatic. The sight of it affected Ruth extraordinarily. It was as if she had seen a naked soul where she had never imagined a soul to be.

She had weighed Sybil in the same calm, complacent, almost patronizing fashion in which she had weighed Bailey, Kirk, everybody. She had set her down as a delightful child, an undeveloped, feather-brained little thing, pleasant to spend an afternoon with, but not to be taken seriously by any one as magnificent and superior as Ruth Winfield. And what manner of a man must Bailey be, Bailey whom she had always looked on as a dear, but as quite a joke, something to be chaffed and made to look foolish, if he was capable of inspiring love like this?

A wave of humility swept over her. The pygmies of her world were springing up as giants, dwarfing her. The pinnacle of superiority on which she had stood so long was crumbling into dust.

She was finding herself. She winced again as the thought stabbed her that she was finding herself too late.

They reached the house in silence, each occupied with her own thoughts. The defiant look had died out of Sybil's face and she was once more a child, crying because unknown forces had hurt it. But Ruth was not looking at her now.

She was too busy examining this new world into which she had been abruptly cast, this world where dolls had souls and jokes lost their point.

At the cottage good news awaited them. The crisis was past. Bailey was definitely out of danger. He was still asleep, and sleeping easily. It had been just an ordinary breakdown, due to worrying and overwork, said the doctor, the bigger of the doctors, the one who had been summoned from New York.

" All your husband needs now, Mrs. Bannister, is rest. See that he is kept quiet. That's all there is to it."

As if by way of a commentary on his words, a small boy on a bicycle rode up with a telegram.

Sybil opened it. She read it, and looked at Ruth with large eyes.

" From the office," she said, handing it to her.

Ruth read it. It was a C. Q. D., an S. O. S. from the front; an appeal for help from the forefront of the battle. She did not understand the details of it, but the purport was clear. The battle had begun, and Bailey was needed. But Bailey lay sleeping in his tent.

She handed it back in silence. There was nothing to be done.

The second telegram arrived half an hour after the first. It differed from the first only in its greater emphasis. Panic seemed to be growing in the army of the lost leader.

The ringing of the telephone began almost simultaneously with the arrival of the second telegram. Ruth went to the receiver. A frantic voice was inquiring for Mr. Bannister even as she put it to her ear.

" This is Mrs. Winfield speaking," she said steadily, " Mr. Bannister's sister. Mr. Bannister is very ill and cannot possibly attend to any business."

There was a silence at the other end of the wire. Then a voice, with the calm of desperation, said: " Thank you." There was a pause. " Thank you," said the voice again in a crushed sort of way, and the receiver was hung up. Ruth went back to Sybil.

The hours passed. How she got through them Ruth hardly knew. Time seemed to have stopped. For the most part they sat in silence. In the afternoon Sybil was allowed to see Bailey for a few minutes. She returned pale and thoughtful. She kissed Ruth before she sat down, and once or twice after that Ruth, looking up, found her eyes fixed upon her. It seemed to Ruth that there was something which she was trying to say, but she asked no questions.

After dinner they sat out on the porch. It was a perfect night. The cool dusk was soothing.

Ruth broke a long silence.

" Sybil!"

" Yes, dear?"

" May I tell you something?"

" Well?"

" I'm afraid it's bad news."

Sybil turned quickly.

" You called up the office while I was with Bailey!"

Ruth started.

" How did you know?"

" I guessed. I have been trying to do it all day, but I hadn't the pluck. Well?"

" I'm afraid things are about as bad as they can be. A Mr. Meadows spoke to me. He was very gloomy. He told me a lot of things which I couldn't follow, details of what had happened, but I understood all that was necessary. I'm afraid—"

" Bailey's ruined?" said Sybil quietly.

"Mr. Meadows seemed to think so. He may have exaggerated."

Sybil shook her head.

"No. Bailey was talking to me upstairs. I expected it."

There was a long silence.

"Ruth."

"Yes?"

"I'm afraid—"

Sybil stopped.

"Yes?"

A sudden light of understanding came to Ruth. She knew what it was that Sybil was trying to say, had been trying to say ever since she spoke with Bailey.

"My money has gone, too? Is that it?"

Sybil did not answer. Ruth went quickly to her and took her in her arms.

"You poor baby," she cried. "Was that what was on your mind, wondering how you should tell me? I knew there was something troubling you."

Sybil began to sob.

"I didn't know how to tell you," she whispered.

Ruth laughed excitedly. She felt as if a great weight had been lifted from her shoulders—a weight which had been crushing the life out of her. In the last few days the scales had fallen from her eyes and she had seen clearly.

She realized now what Kirk had realized from the first, that what had forced his life apart from hers had been the golden wedge of her father's money. It was the burden of wealth that had weighed her down without her knowing it. She felt as if she had been suddenly set free.

"I'm dreadfully sorry," said Sybil feebly.

Ruth laughed again.

"I'm not," she said. "If you knew how glad I was you would be congratulating me instead of looking as if you thought I was going to bite you."

"Glad!"

"Of course I'm glad. Everything's going to be all right again now. Sybil dear, Kirk and I had the most awful quarrel the other day. We — we actually decided it would be better for us to separate. It was all my fault. I had neglected Kirk, and I had neglected Bill, and Kirk couldn't stand it any longer. But now that this has happened, don't you see that it will be all right again? You can't stand on your dignity when you're up against real trouble. If this had not happened, neither of us would have had the pluck to make the first move; but now, you see, we shall just naturally fall into each other's arms and be happy again, he and I and Bill, just as we were before."

"It must be lovely for you having Bill," said little Mrs. Bailey wistfully. "I wish—"

She stopped. There was a corner of her mind into which she could not admit any one, even Ruth.

"Having him ought to have been enough for any woman." Ruth's voice was serious. "It was enough for me in the old days when we were at the studio. What fools women are sometimes? I suppose I lost my head, coming suddenly into all that money—I don't know why; for it was not as if I had not had plenty of time, when father was alive, to get used to the idea of being rich. I think it must have been the unexpectedness of it. I certainly did behave as if I had gone mad. Goodness! I'm glad it's over and that we can make a fresh start."

"What is it like being poor, Ruth? Of course, we were never very well off at home, but we weren't really poor."

"It's heaven if you're with the right man."

Mrs. Bailey sighed.

"Bailey's the right man, as far as I'm concerned. But I'm wondering how he will bear it, poor dear."

Ruth was feeling too happy herself to allow any one else to be unhappy if she could help it.

"Why, of course he will be splendid about it," she said. "You're letting your imagination run away with you. You have got the idea of Bailey and yourself as two broken creatures begging in the streets. I don't know how badly Bailey will be off after this smash, but I do know that he will have all his brains and his energy left."

Ruth was conscious of a momentary feeling of surprise that she should be eulogizing Bailey in this fashion, and—stranger still—that she should be really sincere in what she said. But to-day seemed to have changed everything, and she was regarding her brother with a new-born respect. She could still see Sybil's face as it had appeared in that memorable moment of self-revelation. It had made a deep impression upon her.

"A man like Bailey is worth a large

salary to any one, even if he may not be able to start out for himself again immediately. I'm not worrying about you and Bailey. You will have forgotten all about this crash this time next year."

Sybil brightened up. She was by nature easily moved, and Ruth's words had stimulated her imagination.

"He *is* awfully clever," she said, her eyes shining.

"Why, this sort of thing happens every six months to anybody who has anything to do with Wall Street," proceeded Ruth, fired by her own optimism. "You read about it in the papers every day. Nobody thinks anything of it."

Sybil, though anxious to look on the bright side, could not quite rise to these heights of scorn for the earthquake which had shaken her world.

"I hope not. It would be awful to go through a time like this again."

Ruth reassured her, though it entailed a certain inconsistency on her part. She had a true woman's contempt for consistency.

"Of course you won't have to go through it again. Bailey will be careful in future not to—not to do whatever it is that he has done."

She felt that the end of her inspiriting speech was a little weak, but she did not see how she could mend it. Her talk with Mr. Meadows on the telephone had left her as vague as before as to the actual details of what had been happening that day in Wall Street. She remembered stray remarks of his about bulls, and she had gathered that something had happened to something which Mr. Meadows called G. R. D.'s, which had evidently been at the root of the trouble; but there her grasp of high finance ended.

Sybil, however, was not exigent. She brightened at Ruth's words as if they had been an authoritative pronouncement from an expert.

"Bailey is sure to do right," she said. "I think I'll creep in and see if he's still asleep."

Ruth, left alone on the porch, fell into a pleasant train of thought. There was something in her mental attitude which amused her. She wondered if anybody had ever received the announcement of financial ruin in quite the same way before. Yet to her this attitude seemed the only one possible.

How simple everything was now! She could go to Kirk and, as she had said to Sybil, start again. The golden barrier between them had vanished. One day had wiped out all the wretchedness of the last year. They were back where they had started, with all the accumulated experience of those twelve months to help them steer their little ship clear of the rocks on its new voyage.

She was roused from her dream by the sound of an automobile drawing up at the door. A voice that she recognized called her name. She went quickly down the steps.

"Is that you, Aunt Lora?"

Mrs. Porter, masterly woman, never wasted time in useless chatter.

"Jump in, my dear," she said crisply. "Your husband has stolen William and eloped with that girl Mamie (whom I never trusted) to Connecticut."

CHAPTER XIII

PASTURES NEW

STEVE had arrived at the Connecticut shack in the early dawn of the day which had been so eventful to most of his friends and acquaintances. William Bannister's interest in the drive, at first acute, had ceased after the first five miles, and he had passed the remainder of the journey in a sound sleep from which the stopping of the car did not awaken him.

Steve jumped down and stretched himself. There was a wonderful freshness in the air which made him forget for a moment his desire for repose. He looked about him, breathing deep drafts of its coolness. The robins which, though not so well advertised, rise just as punctually as the lark, were beginning to sing as they made their simple toilets before setting out to attend to the early worm. The sky to the east was a delicate blend of pinks and greens and yellows, with a hint of blue behind the gray which was still the prevailing note.

A vaguely sentimental mood came upon Steve. In his heart he knew perfectly well that he could never be happy for any length of time out of sight and hearing of Broadway cars; but at that moment, such was the magic of the dawn, he felt a longing to settle down in the country and pass the rest of his days a simple farmer with beard unchecked by razor. He saw himself feeding the chickens and addressing the pigs by their pet names, while Mamie, in a cotton frock, called cheerfully to him to come in because breakfast was ready and getting cold.

Mamie! Ah!

His sigh turned into a yawn. He realized with the abruptness which comes to a man who stands alone with nature in the small hours that he was very sleepy. The excitement which had sustained him till now had begun to ebb. The free life of the bearded farmer seemed suddenly less attractive. Bed was what he wanted now, not nature.

He opened the door of the car and lifted William Bannister out, swathed in rugs. The White Hope gurgled drowsily, but did not wake. Steve carried him onto the porch and laid him down. Then he turned his attention to the problem of effecting an entry.

Once an honest man has taken to amateur burgling he soon picks up the trick of it. To open his knife and shoot back the catch of the nearest window was with Steve the work, if not of a moment, of a very few minutes. He climbed in and unlocked the front door. Then he carried his young charge into the sitting-room and laid him down on a chair, a step nearer his ultimate destination—bed.

Steve's faculties were rapidly becoming numb with approaching sleep, but he roused himself to face certain details of the country life which till now had escaped him. His earnest concentration on the main plank in his platform, the spiriting away of William Bannister, had caused him to overlook the fact that no preparations had been made to welcome him on his arrival at his destination. He had treated the shack as if it had been a summer hotel, where he could walk in and engage a room. It now struck him that there was much to be attended to before he could, as he put it to himself, hit the hay. There was the White Hope's bed to be made, and, by way of a preliminary to that, sheets must be found and blankets, not to mention pillows.

Yawning wearily, he set out on his search.

He found sheets, but mistrusted them. They might or might not be perfectly dry. He did not care to risk his godson's valuable health in the experiment. A hazy notion that blankets were always safe restored his spirits, and he became cheerful on reflecting that a child with William Bannister's gift for sleep would not be likely to notice the absence of linen in his bed.

The couch which he finally passed as adequate would have caused Lora Delane Porter's hair to stand erect, but it satisfied Steve. He went down-stairs, and, returning with William Bannister, placed him carefully on it and tucked him in. The White Hope slept on.

Having assured himself that all was well, Steve made up a similar nest for himself, and, removing his coat and shoes, crawled under the blankets. Five minutes later rhythmical snores proclaimed the fact that nature had triumphed over all the discomforts of one of the worst-made beds in Connecticut.

The sun was high when Steve woke. He rose stiffly and went into the other room. William Bannister still slept.

Steve regarded him admiringly.

" For the dormouse act," he mused, " that kid certainly stands alone. You got to hand it to him."

An aching void within him called his mind to the question of breakfast. It began to come home to him that he had not planned out this expedition with that thoroughness which marks the great general.

" I guess I'll have to get out to the nearest village in the bubble," he said. " And while I'm there maybe I'd better send Kirk a wire. And I reckon I'll have to take the kid. If he wakes up and finds me gone he'll throw fits. Up you get, squire."

He kneaded the recumbent form of his godson with a large hand until he had massaged out of him the last remains of his great sleep. It took some time, but it was effective. The White Hope sat up, full of life and energy. He inspected Steve gravely for a moment, endeavoring to place him.

" Hello, Steve," he said at length.

" Hello, kid."

" Where am I?"

" In the country. In Connecticut."

" What's 'Necticut?"

" This is. Where we are."

" Where are we?"

"YOU WANT TO FORGET ALL THE DOPE THEY SHOT INTO YOU BACK IN NEW YORK AND START FRESH"

" Here. In Connecticut."

" Why?"

Steve raised a protesting hand.

" Not so early in the day, kid; not before breakfast," he pleaded. " Honest, I'm not strong enough. It ain't as if we was a vaudeville team that had got to rehearse."

" What's rehearse?"

Steve changed the subject.

" Say, kid, ain't you feeling like you could bite into something? I got an emptiness inside me as big as all outdoors. How about a mouthful of cereal and a shirred egg? Now, for the love of Mike," he went on quickly, as his godson opened his mouth to speak, " don't say 'What's shirred?' It's something you do to eggs. It's one way of fixing 'em."

" What's fixing?" inquired William Bannister brightly.

Steve sighed. When he spoke he was calm, but determined.

" That'll be all the dialogue for the present," he said. " We'll play the rest of our act in dumb show. Get a move on you, and I'll take you out in the bubble—the automobile, the car, the chug-chug wagon, the thing we came here in, if you want to know what bubble is—and we'll scare up some breakfast."

Steve's ignorance of the locality in which he found himself was complete; but he had a general impression that farmers as a class were people who delighted in providing breakfasts for the needy, if the needy possessed the necessary price. Acting on this assumption, he postponed his trip to the nearest town and drove slowly along the roads with his eyes open for signs of life.

He found a suitable farm and, applying the brakes, gathered up William Bannister and knocked at the door.

His surmise as to the hospitality of farmers proved correct, and presently they were sitting down to a breakfast which it did his famished soul good to contemplate.

William Bannister seemed less enthusiastic. Steve, having disposed of two eggs in quick succession, turned to see how his young charge was progressing with his repast, and found him eying a bowl of bread-and-milk in a sort of frozen horror.

"What's the matter, kid?" he asked. "Get busy."

"No paper," said William Bannister.

"For the love of Pete! Do you expect your morning paper out in the woods?"

"No paper," repeated the White Hope firmly.

Steve regarded him thoughtfully.

"I didn't have this trip planned out right," he said regretfully. "I ought to have got Mamie to come along. I bet a hundred dollars she would have got next to your meanings in a second. I pass. What's your kick, anyway? What's all this about paper?"

"Aunty Lora says not to eat bread that doesn't come wrapped up in paper," said the White Hope, becoming surprisingly lucid. "Mamie undoes it out of crinkly paper."

"I get you. They feed you rolls at home wrapped up in tissue-paper, is that it?"

"What's tissue?"

"Same as crinkly. Well, see here. You remember what we was talking about last night about germs?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's one thing germs never do, eat bread out of crinkly paper. You want to forget all the dope they shot into you back in New York and start fresh. You do what I tell you and you can't go wrong. If you're going to be a regular germ, what you've got to do is to wrap yourself round that bread-and-milk the quickest you can. Get me? Till you do that we can't begin to start out to have a good time."

William Bannister made no more objections. He attacked his meal with an easy conscience, and about a quarter of an hour later leaned back with a deep sigh of repletion.

Steve, meanwhile, had entered into conversation with the lady of the house.

"Say, I guess you ain't got a kid of your own anywheres, have you?"

"Sure I have," said the hostess proudly. "He's out in the field with his pop this minute. His name's Jim."

"Fine. I want to get hold of a kid to play with this kid here. Jim sounds pretty good to me. About the same age as this one?"

"For the Lord's sake! Jim's eighteen and weighs two hundred pounds."

"Cut out Jim. I thought from the way you spoke he was a regular kid. Know any one in these parts who's got something about the same weight as this one?"

The farmer's wife reflected.

"Kids is pretty scarce around here," she said. "I reckon you won't get one that I knows of. There's that Tom Whiting, but he's a bad boy. He ain't been raised right."

"What's the matter with him?"

"I don't want to speak harm of no one, but his father used to be a low prize-fighter, and you know what they are."

Steve nodded sympathetically.

"Regular plug-uglies," he said. "A friend of mine used to have to mix with them quite a lot, poor fellah! He used to say they was none of them truly refined. And this kid takes after his pop, eh? Kind of scrappy kid, is that it?"

"He's a bad boy."

"Well, maybe I'd better look him over, just in case. Where's he to be found?"

"They live in the cottage by the big house you can see through them trees. His pop looks after Mr. Wilson's prize dawgs. That's his job."

"What's Wilson?" asked the White Hope, coming out of his stupor.

"You beat me to it by a second, kid. I was just going to ask it myself."

"He's one of them rich New Yawkers. He has his summer place here, and this Whiting looks after his prize dawgs."

"Well, I guess I'll give him a call. It's going to be lonesome for my kid if he ain't got some one to show him how to hit it up. He's not used to country life. Come along. We'll get into the bubble and go and send your pop a telegram."

"What's telegram?" asked William Bannister.

"I got you placed now," said Steve, regarding him with interest. "You're not going to turn into an ambassador or an artist or any of them things. You're going to be the greatest district attorney that ever came down the pike."

CHAPTER XIV

THE SIXTY-FIRST STREET CYCLONE

It was past seven o'clock when Kirk, bending over the wheel, with Mamie at his side, came in sight of the shack. The journey had been checked just outside the city by a blowout in one of the back tires. Kirk had spent the time, while the shirt-sleeved rescuer from the garage toiled over the injured wheel, walking up and down with a cigar. Neither he nor Mamie had shown much tendency toward conversation. Mamie was habitually of a silent disposition, and Kirk's mind was too full of his thoughts to admit of speech.

Ever since he had read Steve's telegram he had been in the grip of a wild exhilaration. He had not stopped to ask himself what this mad freak of Steve's could possibly lead to in the end—he was satisfied to feel that its immediate result would be that for a brief while, at any rate, he would have his son to himself, away from all the chilling surroundings which had curbed him and frozen his natural feelings in the past.

He tried to keep his mind from dwelling upon Ruth. He had thought too much of her of late for his comfort. Since they had parted that day of the thunder-storm the thought that he had lost her had stabbed him incessantly. He had tried to tell himself that it was the best thing they could do, to separate, since it was so plain that their love had died; but he could not cheat himself into believing it.

It might be true in her case—it must be, or why had she let him go that afternoon?—but, for himself, the separation had taught him that he loved her as much as ever, more than ever. Absence had purified him of that dull anger which had been his so short a while before. He looked back and marveled that he could ever have imagined for a moment that he had ceased to love her.

Now, as he drove along the empty country roads, he forced his mind to dwell, as far as he could, only upon his son. There was a mist before his eyes as he thought of him. What a bully kid he had been! What fun they had had in the old days! But that brought his mind back to Ruth, and he turned his mind resolutely to the future again.

He chuckled silently as he thought of Steve. Of all the mad things to do! What had made him think of it? How had such a wild scheme ever entered his head? This, he supposed, was what Steve called punching instead of sparring. But he had never given him credit for the imagination that could conceive a punch of this magnitude.

And how had he carried it out? He could hardly have broken into the house. Yet that seemed the only way in which it could have been done.

From Steve his thoughts returned to William Bannister. He smiled again. What a time they would have—while it lasted! The worst of it was, it could not last long. To-morrow, he supposed, he would have to take the child back to his home. He could not be a party to this kidnaping raid for any length of time. This must be looked on as a brief holiday, not as a permanent relief.

That was the only flaw in his happiness as he stopped the car at the door of the shack, for by now he had succeeded at last in thrusting the image of Ruth from his mind.

There was a light in the ground-floor window. He raised his head and shouted:

"Steve!"

The door opened.

"Hello, Kirk. That you? Come along in. You're just in time for the main performance."

He caught sight of Mamie standing beside Kirk.

"Who's that?" he cried. For a moment he thought it was Ruth, and his honest heart leaped at the thought that his scheme had worked already and brought Kirk and her together again.

"It's me, Steve," said Mamie in her small voice. And Steve, as he heard it, was seized with the first real qualm he had had since he had embarked upon his great adventure.

As Kirk had endeavored temporarily to forget Ruth, so had he tried not to think of Mamie. It was the only thing he was ashamed of in the whole affair, the shock he must have given her.

"Hello, Mamie," he said sheepishly, and paused. Words did not come readily to him.

Mamie entered the house without speaking. It seemed to Steve that invective would have been better than this ominous silence. He looked ruefully at her retreating back and turned to greet Kirk.

"You're mighty late," he said.

"I only got your telegram toward the end of the afternoon. I had been away all day. I came here as fast as I could hit it up directly I read it. We had a blowout, and that delayed us."

Steve ventured a question.

"Say, Kirk, why 'us,' while we're talking of it? How does Mamie come to be here?"

"She insisted on coming. It seems that everybody in the house was away to-day, so she tells me, so she came round to me with your note."

"I guess this has put me in pretty bad with Mamie," observed Steve regretfully. "Has she been knocking me on the trip?"

"Not a word."

Steve brightened, but became subdued again next moment.

"I guess she's just saving it," he said resignedly.

"Steve, what made you do it?"

"Oh, I reckoned you could do with having the kid to yourself for a spell," said Steve awkwardly.

"You're all right, Steve. But how did you manage it? I shouldn't have thought it possible."

"Oh, it wasn't so hard, that part. I just hid in the house, and—but say, let's forget it; it makes me feel kind of mean, somehow. It seems to me I may have lost Mamie her job. It's mighty hard to do the right thing by every one in this world, ain't it? Come along in and see the kid. He's great. Are you feeling ready for supper? Him and me was just going to start."

It occurred to Kirk for the first time that he was hungry.

"Have you got anything to eat, Steve?"

Steve brightened again.

"Have we?" he said. "We've got everything there is in Connecticut! Why, say, we're celebrating. This is our big day. Know what's happened? Why—"

He stopped short, as if somebody had choked him. They had gone into the sitting-room while he was speaking. The table was laid for supper. A chafing-dish stood at one end, and the remainder of the available space was filled with a collection of foods, from cold chicken to candy, which did credit to Steve's imagination.

But it was not the sight of these that checked his flow of speech. It was the look on Mamie's face as he caught sight of it in the lamplight. The White Hope was sitting at the table in the attitude of one who has heard the gong and is anxious to begin; while Mamie, bending over him, raised her head as the two men entered and fixed Steve with a baleful stare.

"What have you been doing to the poor mite," she demanded fiercely, "to get his face scratched this way?"

There was no doubt about the scratch. It was a long, angry red line running from temple to chin. The White Hope, becoming conscious of the fact that the attention of the public was upon him, and diagnosing the cause, volunteered an explanation.

"Bad boy," he said, and looked meaningly again at the candy.

"What does he mean by 'bad boy'?"

"Just what he says, Mamie, honest. Gee! you don't think *I* done it, do you?"

"Have you been letting the precious lamb *fight?*" cried Mamie, her eyes two circles of blue indignation.

Steve's enthusiasm overcame his sense of guilt. He uttered a whoop.

"*Letting* him! Gee! Listen to her! Why, say, that kid don't have to be let! He's a scrapper from Swatville-on-the-Bingle. Honest! That's what all this food is about. We're celebrating. This is a little supper given in his honor by a few of his admirers and backers, meaning me. Why, say, Kirk, that kid of yours is just the greatest thing that ever happened. Get that chafing-dish going and I'll tell you all about it."

"How did he come by that scratch?" said Mamie, coldly sticking to her point.

"I'll tell you quick enough. But let's start in on the eats first. You wouldn't keep a coming champ waiting for his grub, would you? Look how he's lamping that candy."

"Were you going to let the poor mite stuff himself with candy, Steve Dingle?"

"Sure. Whatever he says goes. He owns the joint after this afternoon."

Mamie swiftly removed the unwholesome delicacy.

"The idea!"

Kirk was busying himself with the chafing-dish.

"What have you got in here, Steve?"

"Lobster, colonel. I had to drive thirty miles to get it, too."

Mamie looked at him fixedly.

"Were you going to feed lobster to this child?" she asked with ominous calm. "Were you intending to put him to bed full of broiled lobster and marshmallows?"

"Nix on the rough stuff, Mamie," pleaded the embarrassed pugilist. "How was I to know what kids feed on? And maybe he would have passed up the lobster at that and stuck to the sardines."

"Sardines!"

"Ain't kids allowed sardines?" said Steve anxiously. "The guy at the store told me they were wholesome and nourishing. It looked to me as if that ought to hit young Fitzsimmons about right. What's the matter with them?"

"A little bread-and-milk is all that he ever has before he goes to bed."

Steve detected a flaw in this and hastened to make his point.

"Sure," he said, "but he don't win the bantam-weight champeenship of Connecticut every night."

"Is that what he's done to-day, Steve?" asked Kirk.

"It certainly is. Ain't I telling you?"

"That's the trouble. You're not. You and Mamie seem to be having a discussion about the nourishing properties of sardines and lobster. What has been happening this afternoon?"

"Bad boy," remarked William Bannister with his mouth full.

"That's right," said Steve. "That's it in a nutshell. Say, it was this way. It seemed to me that, having no kid of his own age to play around with, his nibs was apt to get lonesome, so I asked about and found that there was a guy of the name of Whiting living near here who had a kid of the same age or thereabouts. Maybe you remember him? He used to fight at the feather-weight limit some time back. Called himself Young O'Brien. He was a pretty good scrapper in his time, and now he's up here looking after some gent's prize dogs.

"Well, I goes to him and borrows his kid. He's a scrappy sort of kid at that and weighs ten pounds more than his nibs; but I reckoned he'd have to do, and I thought I could stay around and part 'em if they got to mixing it."

Mamie uttered an indignant exclamation, but Kirk's eyes were gleaming proudly.

"Well?" he said.

Steve swallowed lobster and resumed.

"Well, you know how it is. You meet a guy who's been in the same line of business as yourself and you find you've got a heap to talk about. I'd never happened across this gink Whiting, but I knew of him, and, of course, he'd heard of me, and we got to discussing things. I seen him lose on a foul to Tommy King in the eighteenth round out in Los Angeles, and that kept us busy talking, him having it that he hadn't gone within a mile of fouling Tommy and me saying I'd been in a ring-seat and had the goods on him same as if I'd taken a snap-shot. Well, we was both getting pretty hot under the collar about it when suddenly there's the blazes of a noise behind us, and there's the two kids scrapping all over the lot. The Whiting kid had started it, mind you, and him ten pounds heavier than Bill, and tough, too."

The White Hope confirmed this.

"Bad boy," he remarked, and with a deep breath resumed excavating work on a grapefruit.

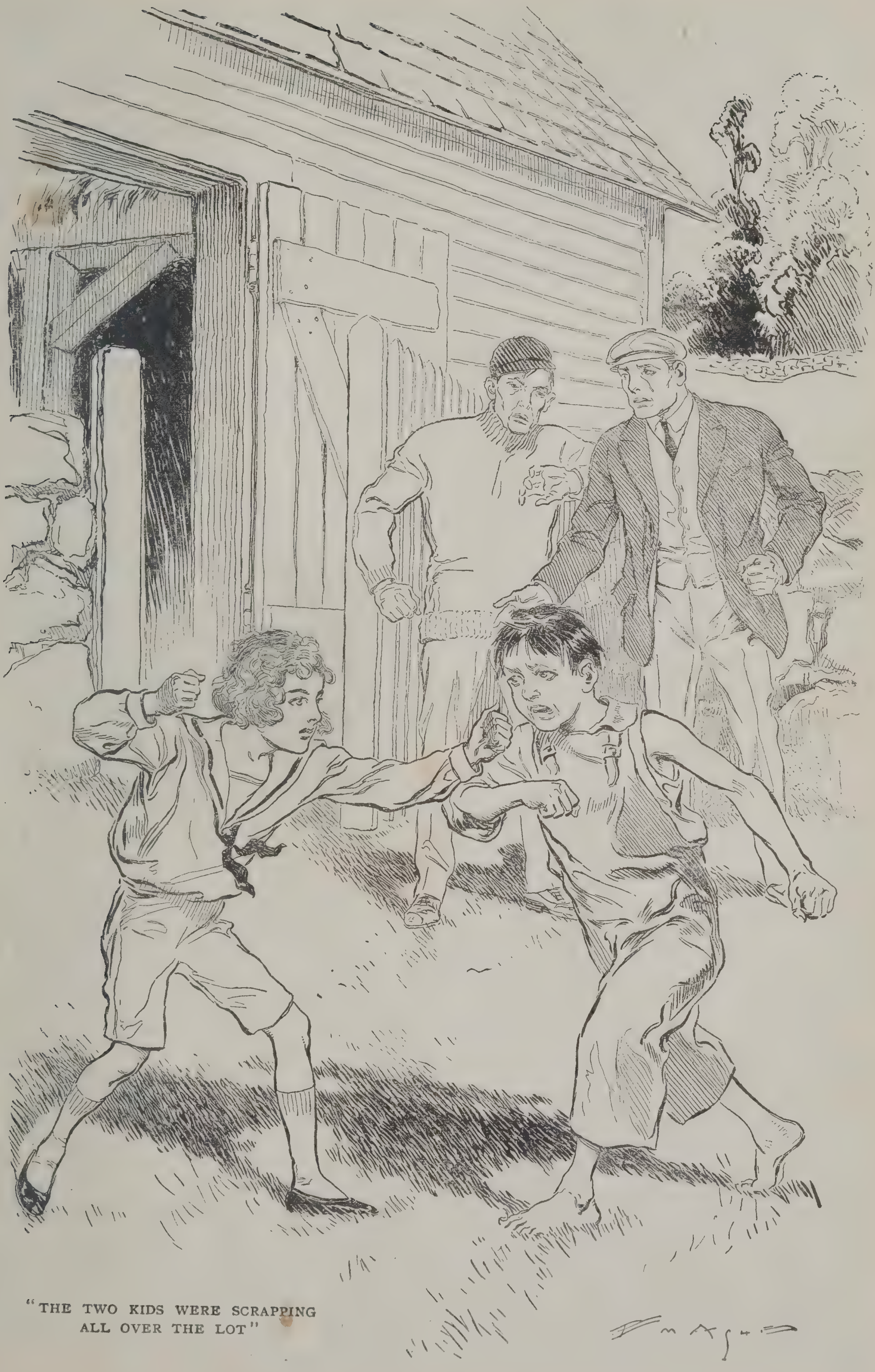
"Well, I was just making a jump to separate them when this Whiting gook says, 'Betcha a dollar my kid wins!' and before I knew what I was doing I'd taken him. It wasn't that that stopped me, though. It was his saying that his kid took after his dad and could eat up anything of his own age in America. Well, darn it, could I take that from a slob of a mixed-ale scrapper when it was handed out at the finest kid that ever came from New York?"

"Of course not," said Kirk indignantly, and even Mamie forbore to criticise. She bent over the White Hope and gave his grapefruit-stained cheek a kiss.

"Well, I *should* say not!" cried Steve. "I just hollered to his nibs, 'Soak it to him, kid! For the honor of No. 99'; and, believe me, the young bear-cat sort of gathered himself together, winked at me, and began to hammer the stuffing out of the scrappy kid. Say, there wasn't no sterilized stuff about his work. You were a regular germ, all right, weren't you, squire?"

"Germ," agreed the White Hope. He spoke drowsily.

"Gee!" Steve resumed his saga in a whirl of enthusiasm. "Gee! if they're right to start with, if they're born right, if they've got the grit in them, you can't sterilize it out of 'em if you use up half



"THE TWO KIDS WERE SCRAPPING ALL OVER THE LOT" the germ-killer in the country. From the way that kid acted you'd have thought he'd been spending the last year in a training-camp. The other kid rolled him over, but he come up again as if that was just the sort of stuff he liked, and pretty soon I see that he's uncovered a yellow streak in the Whiting kid as big as a barn door. You were on to it, weren't you, colonel?"

But the White Hope had no remarks to offer this time. His head had fallen forward and was resting peacefully in his grapefruit.

"He's asleep," said Mamie.

She picked him up gently and carried him out.

"He's a champeen at that, too," said Steve. "I had to pull him out of the hay this morning. Well, I guess he's earned it. He's had a busy day."

"What happened then, Steve?"

"Why, after that there wasn't a thing to it. Whiting, poor simp, couldn't see it. 'Betcha ten dollars my kid wins,' he hollers. 'He's got him going.' 'Take you,' I shouts; and at that moment the scrappy kid sees it's all over, so he does the old business of fouling, same as his pop done when he fought Tommy King. It's in the blood, I guess. He takes and scratches poor Bill on the cheek.

"That was enough for me. I jumps in. 'All over,' I says. 'My kid wins on a foul.' 'Foul nothing,' says Whiting. 'It was an accident, and you lose because you jumped into the ring, same as Connie McVey did when Corbett fought Sharkey. Think you can get away with it, pulling that old-time stuff?' I didn't trouble to argue with him. 'Oh,' I says, 'is that it? Say, just take a slant at your man. If you don't stop him quick he'll be in Texas.'

"For the scrappy kid was beating it while the going was good and was half a mile away, running hard. Well, that was enough even for the Whiting guy. 'I guess we'll call it a draw,' he says, 'and all bets off.' I just looks at him, and I says, quite civil and polite: 'You darned half-baked slob of a rough-house scrapper,' I says, 'it ain't a draw or anything like it. My kid wins, and I'll trouble you now to proceed to cash in with the dough, or else I'm liable to start something.' So he paid up, and I took the White Hope indoors and give him a wash and brush-up, and we cranks up the bubble and hikes off to the town and spends the money on getting food for the celebration supper. And what's over I slips into the kid's pocket and says: 'That's your first winner's end, kid, and you've earned it.'"

Steve paused and filled his glass.

"I'm on the wagon as a general thing nowadays," he said; "but I reckon this is an occasion. Right here is where we drink his health."

And, overcome by his emotion, he burst into discordant song.

"Fo-or he's a jolly good fellow," bellowed Steve. "For he's a jolly good fellow. For he's—"

There was a sound of quick footsteps outside, and Mamie entered the room like a small whirlwind.

"Be quiet!" she cried. "Do you want to wake him?"

"Wake him?" said Steve. "You can't wake that kid with dynamite."

He raised his glass.

"Ladeez'n gentlemen, the boy wonder! Here's to him! The bantam-weight champeen of Connecticut. The Sixty-First Street Cyclone! The kid they couldn't sterilize! The White Hope!"

"The White Hope!" echoed Kirk.

"Fo-or he's a jolly good fellow—" sang Steve.

"Be quiet," said Mrs. Porter from the doorway, and Steve, wheeling round, caught her eye and collapsed like a pricked balloon.

CHAPTER XV

MRS. PORTER'S WATERLOO

Of the little band of revelers, it would be hard to say which was the most taken aback at this invasion. The excitement of the moment had kept them from hearing the sound of the automobile which Mrs. Porter, mistrusting the rough road that led to the shack, had stopped some distance away.

Perhaps, on the whole, Kirk was more surprised than either of his companions. Their guilty consciences had never been quite free from the idea of the possibility of pursuit; but Kirk, having gathered from Mamie that neither Ruth nor her aunt was aware of what had happened, had counted upon remaining undisturbed till the time for return came on the morrow.

He stood staring at Ruth, who had followed Mrs. Porter into the room.

Mrs. Porter took charge of the situation. She was in her element. She stood with one hand resting on the table as if she were about to make an after-dinner speech—as indeed she was.

Lora Delane Porter was not dissatisfied with the turn events had taken. On the whole, perhaps, it might be said that she was pleased. She intended, when she began to speak, to pulverize Kirk and the abandoned young woman whom he had selected as his partner in his shameful escapade, but in this she was swayed almost entirely by a regard for abstract morality.

As concerned Ruth, she felt that the situation was, on the whole, the best thing that could have happened. To her Napoleonic mind, which took little account of the softer emotions, concerning itself entirely with the future of the race, Kirk had played his part and was now lagging superfluous on the stage. His tendency, she felt, was to retard rather than to assist William Bannister's development. His influence, such as it was, clashed with hers. She did not forget that there had been a time when Ruth, having practically to choose between them, had chosen to go Kirk's way and had abandoned herself to a life which could only be considered unhygienic and retrograde. Her defeat in the matter of Whiskers, the microbe-harboring dog from Ireland, still rankled.

It was true that in what might be called the return match she had utterly routed Kirk; but until this moment she had always been aware of him as an opponent who might have to be reckoned with. She was quite convinced that it would be in the best interests of everybody, especially of William Bannister, if he could be eliminated. There were signs of human weakness in Ruth which sometimes made her uneasy. Ruth, she told herself, might "bear the torch," but when it came to "not faltering" she was less certain of her.

Ruth, it was true, had behaved admirably in the matter of the upbringing of William from the moment of her conversion till now, but might she not at any moment become a backslider and fill the white-tiled nursery with abominable long-haired dogs? Most certainly she might. In a woman who has once been a long-haired dogist there are always possibilities of a relapse into long-haired dogism, just as in a converted cannibal there are always possibilities of a return to the gods of wood and stone and the disposition to look on his fellow man purely in the light of breakfast-food.

For these reasons Mrs. Porter was determined to push home her present advantage, to wipe Kirk off the map as an influence in Ruth's life. It was her intention, having recovered William Bannister and bathed him from head to foot in a weak solution of boric acid, to stand over Ruth while she obtained a divorce. That done, she would be in a position to defy Kirk and all his antagonistic views on the subject of the hygienic upbringing of children.

She rapped the table and prepared to speak.

Even a Napoleon, however, may err from lack of sufficient information; and there was a flaw in her position of which she was unaware. From the beginning of the drive to the end of it Ruth had hardly spoken a word, and Mrs. Porter, in consequence, was still in ignorance of what had been happening that day in Wall Street and the effect of these happenings on her niece's outlook on life. Could she have known it, the silent girl beside her had already suffered the relapse which she had feared as a remote possibility.

Ruth's mind during that drive had been in a confusion of regrets and doubts and hopes. There were times when she refused absolutely to believe the story of Kirk's baseness which her aunt poured into her ear during the first miles of the journey. It was absurd and incredible. Yet, as they raced along the dark roads, doubt came to her and would not be driven out.

A single unfortunate phrase of Kirk's, spoken in haste, but remembered at leisure, formed the basis of this uncertainty. That afternoon when he had left her he had said that Mamie was the real mother of the child. Could it be that Mamie's undeviating devotion to the boy had won the love which she had lost? It was possible. Considered in the light of what Mrs. Porter had told her, it seemed, in her blackest moments, certain.

She knew how wrapped up in the boy Kirk had been. Was it not a logical outcome of his estrangement from herself that he should have turned for consolation to the one person in sympathy with him in his great love for his child?

She tried to read his face as he stood looking at her now, but she could find no hope in it. The eyes that met hers were cold and expressionless.

Mrs. Porter rapped the table a second time.

" Mr. Winfield," she said in the metallic voice with which she was wont to cow publishers insufficiently equipped with dash and enterprise in the matter of advertising treatises on the future of the race, " I have no doubt you are surprised to see us. You appear to be looking your wife in the face. It speaks well for your courage but badly for your sense of shame. If you had any remnants of decent feeling in you, you would be physically incapable of the feat. If you would care to know how your conduct strikes an unprejudiced spectator, I may tell you that I consider you a scoundrel of the worst type and unfit to associate with any but the low company in which I find you."

Steve, who had been listening with interest, and, indeed, a certain relish while Kirk was, as he put it to himself, " getting his " in this spirited fashion, started at the concluding words of the address, which, in his opinion, seemed slightly personal. He had long ago made up his mind that Lora Delane Porter, though an entertaining woman and, on the whole, more worth while than a moving-picture show, was quite mad; but, he felt, even lunatics ought to realize that there is a limit to what they may say.

He moaned protestingly, and rashly, for he drew the speaker's attention upon himself.

" This person," went on Mrs. Porter, indicating Steve with a wave of her hand which caused him to sidestep swiftly and throw up an arm, as had been his habit in the ring when Battling Dick or Fighting Jack endeavored to blot him out with a right swing, " who, I observe, retains the tattered relics of a conscience, seeing that he winces, you employed to do the only dangerous part of your dirty work. I hope he will see that he gets his money. In his place I should be feeling uneasy."

" Ma'am!" protested Steve.

Mrs. Porter silenced him with a gesture.

" Be quiet!" she said.

Steve was quiet.

Mrs. Porter returned to Kirk.

Of all her burning words, Kirk had not heard one. His eyes had never left Ruth's. Like her, he was trying to read a message from a face that seemed only cold. In this crisis of their two lives he had no thought for anybody but her. He had a sense of great issues, of being on the verge of the tremendous; but his brain felt numbed and heavy. He could not think. He could see nothing except her eyes.

His inattention seemed to communicate itself to Mrs. Porter. She rapped imperatively upon the table for the third time. The report galvanized Steve, as, earlier in the day, a similar report had galvanized Mr. Penway; but Kirk did not move.

" Mr. Winfield!"

Still Kirk made no sign that he heard her. It was discouraging, but Lora Delane Porter was not made of the stuff that yields readily to discouragement. She resumed:

" As for this wretched girl "—she indicated the silent Mamie with a wave of her hand — " this abandoned creature whom you have led astray, this shameless partner of your—"

" Say!"

The exclamation came from Steve, and it stopped Mrs. Porter like a bullet. To her this interruption from one whom she had fallen upon and wiped out resembled a voice from the tomb. She was not accustomed to having her victims rise up and cut sharply, even peremptorily, into the flow of her speech. *Macbeth,* confronted by the ghost of *Banquo,* may have been a little more taken aback, but not much.

She endeavored to quell Steve with a glance, but it was instantly apparent that he was immune for the time being to quelling glances. His brown eyes were fixed upon her in a cold stare which she found arresting and charged with menace. His chin protruded and his upper lip was entirely concealed behind its fellow in a most uncomfortable manner.

She had never had the privilege of seeing Steve in the active exercise of his late profession, or she would have recognized the look. It was the one which proclaims the state of mind commonly known as " being fighting mad," and in other days had usually heralded a knockout for some too persistent opponent.

" Say, ma'am, you want to cut that out. That line of talk don't go."

Great is the magic of love that can restore a man in an instant of time from an obsequious wreck to a thing of fire and resolution. A moment before Steve's only immediate object in life had been to stay quiet and keep out of the way as much as possible. He had never been a man of ready speech in the presence of an angry woman; words intimidated him as blows never did, especially the whirl of words which were at Lora Delane Porter's command in moments of emotion.

But this sudden onslaught upon Mamie, innocent Mamie, who had done nothing to anybody, scattered his embarrassment and filled him with much the same spirit which sent bantam-weight knights up against heavy-weight dragons in the Middle Ages. He felt inspired.

"Nix on the 'abandoned creature,'" he said with dignity. "You're on the wrong wire! This here lady is my affianced wife!"

He went to Mamie and, putting his arm round her waist, pressed her to him. He was conscious, as he did so, of a sensation of wonderment at himself. This was the attitude he had dreamed of a thousand times and had been afraid to assume. For the last three years he had been picturing himself in precisely this position, and daily had cursed the lack of nerve which had held him back. Yet here he was, and it had all happened in a moment. A funny thing, life.

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Porter.

"Sure thing," said Steve. His coolness, the ease with which he found words astonished him as much as his rapidity of action.

"I stole the kid," he said, "and it was my idea, at that. Kirk didn't know anything about it. I wired to him to-day what I had done and that he was to come right along. And," added Steve in a burst of inspiration, "I said bring along Mamie, too, as the kid's used to her and there ought to be a woman around. And she could be here, all right, and no harm, she being my affianced wife." He liked that phrase. He had read it in a book somewhere, and it was the goods.

He eyed Mrs. Porter jauntily. Mrs. Porter's gaze wavered. She was not feeling comfortable. Hers was a nature that did not lend itself easily to apologies, yet apologies were obviously what the situation demanded. The thought of all the eloquence which she had expended to no end added to her discomfort. For the first time she was pleased that Kirk had so manifestly not been listening to a word of it.

"Oh!" she said.

She paused.

"That puts a different complexion on this affair."

"Betcha life!"

She paused once more. It was some moments before she could bring herself to speak. She managed it at last.

"I beg your pardon," she said.

"Mine, ma'am?" said Steve grandly. Five minutes before, the idea that he could ever speak grandly to Lora Delane Porter would have seemed ridiculous to him; but he was surprised at nothing now.

"And the young wom— And the future Mrs. Dingle's," said Mrs. Porter with an effort.

"Thank you, ma'am," said Steve, and released Mamie, who forthwith bolted from the room like a scared rabbit.

Steve had started to follow her when Mrs. Porter, magnificent woman, snatching what was left from defeat, stopped him.

"Wait!" she said. "What you have said alters the matter in one respect; but there is another point. On your own confession you have been guilty of the extremely serious offense, the penal offense of kidnaping a child who—"

"Drop me a line about it, ma'am," said Steve. "Me time's rather full just now."

He disappeared into the outer darkness after Mamie.

In the room they had left, Kirk and Ruth faced each other in silence. Lora Delane Porter eyed them grimly. It was the hour of her defeat, and she knew it. Forces too strong for her were at work. Her grand attack, the bringing of these two together that Ruth might confront Kirk in his guilt, had recoiled upon her. The Old Guard had made their charge up the hill, and it had failed. Victory had become a rout. With one speech Steve had destroyed her whole plan of campaign.

She knew that all was over, that in another moment, if she remained, she would be compelled to witness the humiliating spectacle of Ruth in Kirk's arms, stammering the words which intuition told her were even now trembling on her lips. She knew Ruth. She could read her like a primer. And her knowledge told her that she was about to capitulate, that all her pride and resentment had been swept away, that she had gone over to the enemy.

Elemental passions were warring against Lora Delane Porter, and she bowed before them.

" Mr. Winfield," she said sharply, her voice cutting the silence like a knife, " I beg your pardon. I seem to have made a mistake. Good night."

Kirk did not answer.

" Good night, Ruth."

Ruth made no sign that she had heard.

Mrs. Porter, grand in defeat, moved slowly to the door.

But even in the greatest women there is that germ of feminine curiosity which cannot be wholly eliminated, that little grain of dust that asserts itself and clogs the machinery. It had been Mrs. Porter's intention to leave the room without a glance, her back defiantly toward the foe. But, as she reached the door, there came from behind her a sound of movement, a stifled cry, a little sound whose meaning she knew too well.

She hesitated. She stood still, fighting herself. But the grain of dust had done its work. For an instant she ceased to be a smoothly working machine and became a woman subject to the dictates of impulse.

She turned.

Intuition had not deceived her. Ruth had gone over to the enemy. She was in Kirk's arms, holding him to her, her face hidden against his shoulder, for all the world as if Lora Delane Porter, her guiding force, had ceased to exist.

Mrs. Porter closed the door and walked stiffly through the scented night to where the headlights of her automobile cleft the darkness. Birds, asleep in the trees, fluttered uneasily at the sudden throbbing of the engines.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WHITE-HOPE LINK

The White Hope slept. The noise of the departing car, which had roused the birds, had made no impression on him. As Steve had said, dynamite could not do it. He slumbered on, calmly detached, unaware of the remarkable changes which, in the past twenty-four hours, had taken place in his life. An epoch had ended and a new one begun, but he knew it not.

And probably, if Kirk and Ruth, who were standing at his bedside, watching him, had aroused him and informed him of these facts, he would have displayed little excitement. He had the philosophical temperament. He took things as they came. Great natural phenomena, like Lora Delane Porter, he accepted as part of life. When they were in his life, he endured them stoically. When they went out of it, he got on without them. Marcus Aurelius would have liked William Bannister Winfield. They belonged to the same school of thought.

The years have a tendency to destroy this placidity toward life and to develop in a man a sense of gratitude to fate for its occasional kindnesses; and Kirk, having been in the world longer than William Bannister, did not take the gifts of the gods so much for granted. He was profoundly grateful for what had happened. That Lora Delane Porter should have retired from active interference with his concerns was much; but that he should have had the incredible good fortune to be freed from the burden of John Bannister's money was more.

If ever money was the root of all evil, this had been. It had come into his life like a poisonous blight, withering and destroying wherever it touched. It had changed Ruth; it had changed William Bannister; it had changed himself; it was as if the spirit of the old man had lived on, hating him and working him mischief. He had always had a superstitious fear of it; and events had proved him right.

And now the cloud had rolled away. A few crowded hours of Bailey's dashing imbecility had removed the curse forever.

He was alone with Ruth and his son in a world that contained only them, just as in the old days of their happiness. There was something symbolic, something suggestive of the beginning of a new order of things, in their isolation at this very moment. Steve had gone. Mamie had gone. Mrs. Porter had gone. Only he and Ruth and the child were left.

The child — the White Hope — he was the real hero of the story, the real principal of the drama of their three lives. He was the link that bound them together, the force that worked for coherence and against chaos. He stood between them, his hands in theirs; and while he did so there could be no parting of the ways. His grip was light, but as strong as steel. Time would bring troubles, moods, misunderstandings, for they were both human; but, while that grip held, there could be no gulf dividing Ruth and himself, as it had divided them in the past.

He faced the future calmly, with open eyes. It would be rough going at first, very rough going. It meant hard work, incessant work. No more vague masterpieces which might or might not turn into "Carmen" or "The Spanish Maiden." No more delightful idle days to be loafed through in the studio or the shops. No more dreams, seen hazily through the smoke of a cigar, as he lay on the couch and stared at the ceiling, of what he would do to-morrow. To-morrow must look after itself. His business was with the present and the work of the present.

He braced himself to the fight, confident of his power to win. He had found himself.

Bill stirred in his sleep and muttered. Ruth bent over him and kissed the honorable scratch on his cheek.

"Poor little chap! You'll wake up and find that you aren't a millionaire baby after all! I wonder if you'll mind. Kirk, do *you* mind?"

"Mind!"

"I don't," said Ruth. "I think it will be rather fun being poor again."

"Who's poor?" said Kirk stoutly. "I'm not. I've got you and I've got Bill. Do you remember — ages ago — what that Vince girl, the model, you know, said that her friend had called me? A plute. That's me. I'm the richest man in the world."

THE END

NEXT MONTH'S NOVEL

Next month—June—we shall give you another fine novel, a complete long book, entitled

"THE FOREST OF EDEN"

BY FRANCIS WILLIAM SULLIVAN

The readers of THE MUNSEY are invited to come with the author of this story into the depths of the forest, into the heart of nature, yes, into the very Garden of Eden which he fashioned for his hero and his heroine.

There was no flaming sword at the gate of this garden, because they knew not where they entered or emerged. They knew only that in the end a barrier that seemed almost insurmountable was lifted and they walked into the wondrous valley, with their faces set toward a new sunrise, with hands clasped, while the serpent, whose coils they had escaped, was lost in the darkness they left behind.

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"The Forest of Eden" is a real love story.

LIGHT VERSE

HER HAIR

IN other days the lover fond
  Sweet verses used to write,
Unto his lady's tresses soft
  And dusky as the night,
Or Titian braids, or chestnut curls,
  Or classic coils of gold,
But now he has to fit his lines
  To fashion's freakish mold.

He is not certain of the locks
  Selected by the miss
From hour to hour, and so his rimes
  Must run along like this:
"My heart is yours forevermore,
  Entangled in the snare
Of your magenta
          emerald
          pink
          blue
          orange
          purple
                hair."

Minna Irving

WELL FOR THE TROUBADOUR

O MINSTREL of romantic days!
  Well for thy harp and thee
That ye have gone immortal ways
  Where sustenance is free;

For scarce could now your master-tones
  Win guerdon from the mob,
When auto-harps and graphophones
  Are steady on the job.

John Brown Jewett

AN UNDESIRABLE POSITION

PERHAPS the day may come at last
  When woman has a vote;
She'll go, arrayed, that vote to cast,
  In brand-new hat and coat.

Or if on jury duty called,
  Resplendent in the box
She'll calmly sit and gaze enthralled
  On other jurors' frocks.

Or if a judge, in silken gown,
  Its rustles heard afar,
She'll sentence, with judicial frown,
  The prisoner at the bar.

Or as policeman, on her beat
  She'll be a stunning sight;
In tailor-made blue cloth so neat,
  And golden buttons bright.

She'll wear these costumes, though they be
  Conspicuous or odd;
But never, never will agree
  To join the Plain Clothes Squad!

Carolyn Wells

THE DUCKBILL

A STUDY IN NATURAL HISTORY

THE Or-nith-o-rhyn-cus Paradoxus
  Has more than just her name that
      shocks us;
Indeed, this queer Australian creature
Seems freakish in her every feature,

As if her Maker sought to humble
Man's weak invention by the jumble
Seen in this woozy combination
Of bird and beast and navigation.

Web feet, duck's bill, go well together,
But then the beast has nary a feather!
And, surely, anything that's furred
Can hardly be pronounced a bird.

Besides, she is a quadruped
And has no wings; so, as I've said,
We're *sure* she is no bird, at least;
But neither can she be a beast,

For beasts, we all know, don't lay eggs,
Or have birds' bills and webby legs!
And fishes—they've no legs at all,
Or fur or bills, as I recall!

So there! It's well-nigh devilish
To be not beast nor bird nor fish!
We're almost forced in desperation
To say, in all the wide creation

There's *no such thing,* she's just a fable,
Because to place her we're not able;
Or else we must (like men of science,
When something bids their wits defiance)

Content ourselves with calling names,
And shouting at this thing, that shames
Our minds with mystery which mocks us,
"You Ornery-mean-cuss Paradoxus!"

George Jay Smith

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